

Water for all... for ALWAYS



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This new education program, launched in May 2008, strives to answer Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Town of Olds water and wastewater systems, water conservation, water use, water meters and billing, and other topics about water.

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How can I reduce my water usage?

It's easy to find small ways around the house to reduce unnecessary water usage.

- ◆ Turn off the tap or reduce its flow when you are not actively using water to brush your teeth, wash your face or hands, or to rinse off soapy dishes. For a family, this small act will reduce your water usage by about 31 litres per day.
- ◆ Installing HET, low-flush or dual-flush toilets will reduce water use by up to 63 litres per person per day.
- ◆ Run your dishwasher and washing machine only when they are fully loaded, reducing usage by around 132 litres of water a week.
- ◆ Installing low-flow shower heads and having shorter showers will reduce this usage by up to 50 litres per 10-minute shower.
- ◆ Get a rain barrel or two to capture rainwater for use in the garden. The Town of Olds sells rain barrels for \$50, but any type of barrel will also work fine.

How do I create a water-efficient Yard?

Most people tend to mow too often and to cut the grass too short. For typical grass species, mowing grass to a height of 2 1/2 to 3 inches (6-8 cm) and never cutting more than one-third of the grass length will encourage longer roots and shade the soil, reducing its temperature and moisture loss from evaporation. Leave grass clippings on the lawn as they are an excellent source of vital nitrogen. Set your mower height to cut grass no lower than 2 1/2 to 3 inches (6-8 cm) for most types of grasses. Avoid cutting the grass when it is wet. Alter the direction you mow each time you cut the grass. Keep the blades of your mower sharp - dull blades tear the grass leaving it open to disease and heat stress. Traditional landscape design creates a constant battle against drought conditions, weed infestation, insect damage, drainage problems, trodden down lawns, and damage due to salt and oily runoff from sidewalks. By taking advantage of plants which thrive under the various conditions which exist around your property, you can create a landscape that is dynamic, beautiful and easy to maintain. Plant drought-resistant plants and grasses which require little or no watering during hot, dry periods. Many commonly available plants (especially established perennials) require no more water than that supplied by Mother Nature. Plant trees and shrubs - a shaded landscape is cooler and therefore, retains more water. Trees and shrubs also provide natural wind breaks, reducing plant water loss from the drying effects of Alberta winds. *(Some info is from CMHC's "Household Guide to Water Efficiency")*

For more information visit the **Olds Sustainable Living** page at www.olds.ca

This information was also featured in the 12 August 2008 issue of the Olds Albertan