



# District News

November 2016

## District Board of Directors

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## Upcoming Events November

6th — Daylight Saving Time Ends

8th — Election Day

15th — Regular Board Meeting

## Thanksgiving Observance Office Hours

23rd — Office Closes at Noon

24th — Office Closed

25th — Office Closed

## Fall is Here, Change is Near

Clocks aren't the only things changing this fall. Once temperatures drop your landscape's appearance and watering needs will change as the lawn adjusts to the new season.

Now that fall has arrived, you need to prepare your lawn for next spring. This means providing it with the protection it needs for winter dormancy so that you won't have to use as much water to awaken it once spring returns.

Trees and ponds will need special attention too. Here are some fall preparation tips recommended by Colorado Springs Utilities<sup>1</sup> to help you get started:

### Fertilization

Fertilizing the lawn now will protect and strengthen it with nutrients that increase its winter resilience.

Trees, shrubs and perennial flowers do not need to be fertilized at this time.

Their systems are already preparing for dormancy and storing needed nutrients in their trunks and roots. Fertilizing them now will confuse them and they will not survive during the winter.

### Mulching

Wood mulch should be layered at least 3" - 4" thick to guarantee insulation and moisture retention.

### Planting

If you plan to water throughout the winter and want to add plants to your landscape during the fall, make sure to choose hearty plants that can withstand the winter. If you are unsure which plants are best for your landscaping needs, consult a specialist.

### Weeds

Weeds are a nuisance throughout the year. Changing seasons and additional rainfall will introduce new types of weeds. Prepare now to tackle winter

## Rainwater Harvesting - The Basics

More households are relying upon active rainwater harvesting systems for plant irrigation and other in-home uses because of the environmental and cost-effective benefits. According to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) offers guidelines for rainwater use in its publication, "Harvesting, Storing and Treating Rainwater for Domestic Use."

If you would like to participate in rainwater harvesting it is easy to get started. Texas A&M offers a free, five-part video course on its website that teaches the basics of rainwater

harvesting, including installation, sizing treatment and maintenance.

(<http://rainwaterharvesting.tamu.edu/in-home-use-videos>).

### What You Need

A rain barrel and hose spigot are the basic materials required to get started. Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Dallas frequently offers a "Make a Rain Barrel" class that teaches participants how to construct their own 55 gallon rain barrel and collect rainwater for home use. Check their website for course details:

(<http://dallas.tamu.edu/courses/2016>).

# Fall is Here, Change is Near, continued

weeds by adjusting your weed treatment program. Once they take root it is hard to evict them.

## Irrigation Systems

Fall is the best time to service your irrigation system or upgrade to a new system. At the first sign of freezing temperatures blow out your irrigation system.

If you have a rain sensor, make sure to use it during this time. If you do not, you may want to consider adding one in addition to upgrading your sprinkler system with check valves.

If you do not plan to use your irrigation system during this time keep plants hydrated with a garden hose to prevent death from dehydration.

## Watering

Once the lawn becomes dormant it will eventually turn brown. You will have an easier time returning your lawn to green in the spring if

you occasionally water when it becomes dry.

Plants are easily susceptible to dehydration at this time and replacing them can be costly. Instead, save yourself some money by protecting them now.

This includes trees and shrubs which sustain themselves by going to the source of the water to stay hydrated. If necessary, they will quench their thirst from wastewater pipes.

To prevent pipe damage from roots you must provide trees and shrubs with adequate water. If you are surrounded by trees and shrubs check your pipes at least once a year.

## Winter Watering Tips

Water newly planted lawns, trees, shrubs and flowers only when temperatures are above 40 degrees.

Water once or twice a month after temperatures drop (in accordance with current water restrictions) to allow the water to slowly soak in before freezing.

Do not winter water cacti, succulents, buffalo grass, blue grama or xeric plants during the winter. They are more resistant to drought and will provide their own hydration.

## Ponds

Measure water temperatures to determine the best time to start winterizing your pond. <sup>2</sup>

Fish will require winter housing and plants will need to be repotted into new temporary homes. Use this time to check for leaks, and perform necessary maintenance on pipes, drains and filters.

Footnotes

1 ("Fall repairation").

2 ("Seasonal Pond Care: How to Prepare Your Pond for Fall and Winter").

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## Leak Detection and Prevention

When temperatures drop, unexpected plumbing damage from water leaks becomes more apparent and can be financially debilitating.

During the holidays it can make a hospitable environment extremely unpleasant when guests arrive and there is only one bathroom.

Early leak detection is a smart and effective way to avoid costly repairs that could sabotage your holiday.

A great way to tell if you have a leak is by checking your water meter. If it appears to be working properly and you cannot attribute

the additional water usage to outdoor use or increased indoor use, contact Utility Billing and request a meter reading. You could have a leak.

## Indoor Leaks

Go through every room and check for leaks from dripping pipes, sinks, toilets and faucets. Home Water Works states, "a faucet dripping slowly at only one drop every two seconds will waste more than 1,000 gallons of water per year."

Sometimes a simple tightening will fix the problem, but something more serious may require an

inspection and solution from a professional.

Be aware that toilet leaks, one of the most common sources of in-home leaks, may go undetected because they can be silent and are not easily detected.

A thorough inspection of your toilet that includes a dye test will help you determine if there is a leak.

If you must replace the toilet or have an older toilet, it may be wise to replace it with a new water efficient model which operates at the same level, but uses less water.

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# Holiday Water Saving Tips

During the holidays many families gather at one family member's household for festivities. This means an increase in water usage and higher utility bills for that household, but it does not have to be that way.

Here are some holiday water saving tips that will help you keep more money in your wallet while protecting the environment:

## **Kitchen**

When it is time to bake the turkey, defrost it and your other meats in the refrigerator overnight instead of thawing them in cold water.

Wash or peel vegetables in a large bowl instead of running water and reuse the water for plants.

When cooking, use the proper size pots and pans. Larger sizes require more water to fill.

When boiling, place vegetables in a strainer and allow the pot to double as a steamer. If you have no vegetables to steam use a

tight-fitting lid to slow the steam from escaping and keep more water in your pot. Use the leftover water as a base for soup or water to hydrate the garden.

Use disposable plates, cups and utensils for a faster clean up without water. Decorative plates with holiday designs will make your job easier and complement your festive table.

According to the USDA,<sup>1</sup> "a typical holiday dinner for eight requires more than 42,000 gallons of water to grow and prepare the food."

Avoid food waste and decrease your water footprint by serving smaller portions. Guests can always come back for more. Send leftover food home with guests or plan recipes to create new dishes using them.

Place a pitcher of cold water on the table for guests to serve themselves. After dinner use the leftover water for pets or plants.

If disposable plates are not your style, scrape leftover food from dishes into the trash instead of rinsing the plates over the garbage disposal.

Load the dishwasher until it is completely full before starting the load.

If you must wash dishes by hand fill one side of the sink with a minimum amount of soapy water and fill the other side with water to rinse. Reuse the rinse water for plants and hope Santa brings you a new dishwasher this year.

## **Bathroom**

Converting your old showerhead to a low-flow model is another great way to save water. According to Water Use it Wisely, changing your showerhead can save up to 750 gallons of water a month,

When showering, place a bucket under the faucet while waiting for

*(Continued on page 4)*

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## New Rate Order Introduces Winter Averaging

The new Rate Order, adopted by the Board of Directors, went into effect on October 1, 2016. Information about the new rates was posted on the District website and customers were mailed a detailed summary which introduced Winter Averaging and outlined the new water and sewer rates.

### **Winter Averaging**

Effective, April 1, 2017, the District will begin winter averaging for the purpose of calculating sewer charges on utility bills. The sewer charges are based on average water consumption for three months (December, January and February billing). The average

consumption will be analyzed annually and new rates will take effect the first of April each year.

New customers will be assigned a default value user charge that is equal to the average winter water use for all residential customers. The winter average used for new residential customer is 7,000 gallons.

Any resident filling a pool due to maintenance or construction during the averaging months may request that the water used be subtracted from the usage of the month the water was used.

A resident with a houseline leak during the averaging months may

request a reduction in the sewer usage calculation. Requests must be in writing, addressed to the General Manager, and provide documentation that shows maintenance, construction or repairs as applicable to the issue.

All requests for sewer average reductions must be submitted no later than March 15th. The General Manager or a duly authorized representative may adjust the metered water usage in determining the winter average.

The current Rate Order may be viewed and downloaded on the Rates & Charges page of the District website.

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## Holiday Water Saving Tips, continued

the hot water to heat. Use the bucket water collected for plants or pets.

With additional house guests it helps to shorten the time you shower to under 5 minutes. This could save up to 1,000 gallons of water a month and guarantees there will be enough hot water left for everyone in the house.

Install water saving aerators on bathroom faucets, and encourage guests when brushing teeth or lathering hands to turn the water off while performing the tasks. Every drop counts.

Use the stopper and fill the sink with water when shaving instead of continually running water to rinse the razor. Do the same when washing your face.

Little changes to your routine may first seem like an inconvenience, but can make a big difference towards conserving water and protecting the environment.

### Laundry

House guests usually means more laundry. Give them each a set of towels to use while visiting and ask them to reuse them,

When it is time to wash, combine loads to create a full wash and be sure to set the load size to match.

Delicate items that require hand washing should be grouped, if possible.

When washing dark items avoid the warm temperature and select cold instead. This will not only save water and energy, but help your clothes last longer.

If you are in the market for a new machine, make sure to purchase an Energy Star front-loading model, because front-loading washers use less water than their top-loading counterparts.

Water Use it Wisely states, "some models can save up to 20 gallons of water per load."



#### Footnotes

1 (<http://www.tampabaywater.org/newsroom/agencynews/ArtMID/3314/ArticleID/313/Holiday-Water-Saving-Tips.aspx>).

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## Food Choices - The Water Footprint of Food

Did you know that what you decide to eat for breakfast, lunch and dinner affects water resources? We need water to grow food, but it does not stop there. We also need water to prepare food, but the food we prepare, especially processed foods, use more water.

The water footprint, based on a concept created by the Water Footprint Network (WFN), is the amount of water you use throughout the day. It includes water directly used, water used to produce the food you eat, products you buy, energy consumed and water saved when you recycle.

For more information on the water footprint or how to find yours visit

(<http://www.gracelinks.org/1408/water-footprint-calculator>).

The Grace Communications Foundation Water Program (GCFWP) makes the following recommendations to decrease the water footprint of food:

(1) Unless you are a vegetarian, meat primarily determines what's for dinner. Meat, especially beef, has a high water footprint. Replace meat with plant-based alternatives, pasture-raised cuts, or eat less of it.

(2) Plan your meals.

(3) Shop on the outside grocery store aisles for healthier foods.

(4) Avoid frozen dinners and heavily processed foods.

(5) Buy organic foods.

(6) Eat at local restaurants.

(7) Drink less coffee; substitute tea in the afternoon.

(8) Avoid pre-prepared deserts and make your own.

For a detailed list of tips read GCFWP's Ecocentric Blog:

(<http://www.gracelinks.org/blog/7525/your-diet-uses-a-lot-of-water-here-are-9-tips-to-help-you-c>).

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