

# ROXBOROUGH WATER & SANITATION DISTRICT

## Conservation begins with you.

One consumer at a time will make a difference. Whether you are a homeowner in a residential community, a board member of an HOA, running an organization or business, reducing water use saves money and creates a more sustainable resource. Instead of a one-way drain on a limited supply, by working together, our community, united, can become a shining example of what we can accomplish. This creates yet another strong benefit to living in Roxborough, which is to everyone's benefit (strong property values). Being water-efficient is important and this list will give you lots of way to make a difference!

## Doing the right thing.

Share ideas – inspire others to get on board. People generally do the right thing, but they don't always have the right information or lack a little motivation. By giving everyone you know the information and inspiration to be water-efficient, just imagine what can be accomplished! What we're asking is easy to do. Consider how lucky we are to live in a very advanced country with treated, safe for consumption water. But it's no secret; water is a limited resource, and our global climate is changing. If you can make the majority of these 102 ways part of your life and help every family member, every friend, everyone you know get on board, then we can all be proud of our efforts in building a strong water-smart future for our children. Here's the list. If you have other ideas, please let us know!

## 102 ways to be water-efficient

How many are you doing now? How many more can you do?

### INDOORS

1. When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink with wash water, the other with rinse water. This eliminates the need for the faucet to lose a lot of water while washing.
2. Eliminate pre-rinsing dishes that are going into a dishwasher. Simply scrape off excess food, load and run the dishwasher-only when full. This could save you up to 1,000 gallons a month!
3. Update your appliances to new energy-efficient, approved water-saving appliances like the Energy Star brand.
4. When shopping for a new appliance, consider one that offers cycle and load size adjustments to maximize its water use every time.
5. Put aerators on all of your home and business faucets.

6. Fix any leaky faucets. It can save 140 or more gallons a week!
7. Teach children to turn the faucets OFF tightly after each use.
8. Save up to 4 gallons a minute of water by simply turning the faucet off when brushing teeth or shaving! A family of four can save 200 gallons or more!
9. Save 50 to 150 gallons per month by reducing the use of a garbage disposal and instead either compost kitchen waste (great for the garden) or toss into the garbage.
10. Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap until it gets cold for a drink or instead of using your refrigerator's energy to provide cold water.
11. Wash vegetables in a sink or pan with partially filled water instead of running tap water; and when finished, pour this water on your plants.
12. Designate one glass to be your drinking water glass each day. This will cut down on the number of times you run your dishwasher – especially if you have a lot of children.
13. Thaw frozen food in a bowl of water instead of running water; then reuse that water on plants.
14. Pre-soak pots and pans instead of running water while scrubbing.
15. Install an instant hot water dispenser on your kitchen sink which reduces household energy heating costs and saves water from being wasted while the tap warms up.
16. If you accidentally drop ice cubes when filling your glass from the freezer, or occasionally clean out the ice tray, put the ice cubes on a house plant instead...they won't mind an occasional cool down.
17. Cook food in as little water as possible. Great alternatives are broth, wine, even beer (the alcohol content cooks out, but makes meats soft and tender) and it adds a nice flavor to many recipes.
18. Use pots and pans that are most size appropriate for the amount of food. This will save energy costs and water-clean up.
19. When you give your pet fresh water, recycle the old water on plants.
20. To save water and time, wash your face or shave while showering.

21. Keep a watering can in the shower to catch excess as it warms up or runs – then use this water on houseplants or garden.
22. Turn the water off while you shampoo and condition your hair (and ladies: shaving your legs) – this can save more than 50 gallons every week!
23. Try to keep your shower time to under 5 minutes. You'll save up to 1,000 gallons a month if you can cut your time in half.
24. When washing your hands, don't let the water run while soaping up.
25. Guys: turn the sink water off when shaving and save more than 100 gallons a week.
26. If your shower can fill a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, replace it with a new water-efficient showerhead.
27. Install water softening systems only when necessary. Save water and salt by running the minimum number of regenerations necessary to maintain water softness.
28. Bathe your young children at the same time.
29. Plug the bathtub before turning the water on; then adjust the temperature as the tub fills up.
30. Already have a low-flow showerhead? They're inexpensive, easy to install, and can save a family more than 500 gallons a week!
31. While you're being the great do-it-yourselfer, also install low-volume toilets or dual flush system (lower and higher volume options).
32. Double check that your toilet flapper doesn't stick open after flushing.
33. Check for toilets that leak or any faucets that drip. Fixing just one leaky appliance can save 500 gallons every month!
34. Put food coloring in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the toilet bowl, AHA! You have located a leak that needs your immediate attention.
35. Don't use your toilet as a trash can for anything other than human waste. Save 400 to 600 gallons in unnecessary flushing!

36. If your toilet is pre-1980, place a toilet dam or bottle filled with water in the tank to cut down on the amount of water used for each flush. Be sure the device does not interfere with operating parts.
37. Insulate hot water pipes to speed up the heating process.
38. Wash clothes only when you have a full load – save up to 600 gallons a month!
39. Whenever you do wash clothes, match the water level to the size of your load, and whenever possible, wash full load cycles only.
40. Check washing machine hoses twice/year for cracks that could form into leaks.
41. There are so many energy-efficient appliances available today – check for the best rated upgrade to what you have. The new washers save up to 20 gallons per load!
42. Have you heard of a ‘tankless water heater?’ Instead of waiting for your shower to get warm, a tankless or demand water heater gives you instant hot water when the shower is turned on. This accounts for about 13% of a home’s energy use. A natural gas-burning model uses about 30% less energy than its electric alternative according to Bosch and Takagi companies who sell these models.
43. Make sure you know where your master water shut-off valve is located. This could save hundreds of gallons of water, not to mention damage to your home if a pipe were to burst.
44. Have a maintenance checkup on evaporative coolers seasonally.
45. Offer suggestions at your workplace on how the business can save water at work.
46. Encourage your school to promote water conservation in fun ways with students.
47. Motivate friends and neighbors to be part of a water-conscious community.
48. Anyone today can be a journalist (online blogs and local community outreach). Write a little article for your local neighborhood newspaper or HOA newsletter and share water-saving tips and results (lower water bills/gallons saved) to inspire others!

49. Compare last year's water bills from summer to winter months. See your monthly average of total gallons used. The biggest amount where you can realize savings will be outside on your landscape by upgrading to drought-tolerant grasses and plants. As you upgrade home appliances, you should also track your savings because it will feel good to know you are making a difference in your pocketbook, too!

## OUTDOORS

50. Reduce the amount of grass in your yard in areas that are not played on or used for entertaining (like the sides of the house). If you don't walk on it, why spend money on water-thirsty bluegrass? Instead, choose Xeric shrubs, ground covers and water-efficient grasses like Blue Grama or Buffalo Grass.
51. Add compost when you plant new beds or prep the yard for new soil. 5 to 6 cubic yards of compost per 1000 square feet of landscape adds great water-holding organic matter to the soil that helps plants grow.
52. When you clean your fish tank, use the drained water on your landscape plants. This water is especially rich in nitrogen and phosphorous, providing you with a free and effective fertilizer!
53. Attend FREE Xeriscape workshops offered at many garden centers, clubs or libraries. Check out books – get inspired – the more you know, the more your garden will reflect a water-conscious homeowner!
54. Find out just how many minutes your irrigation system should really run per zone. Talk to Xeriscape experts. Trees do not need the same amount of water as grass or flowers. A lot of people over water which creates a short root system. Grass, trees, and flowers need air, too!
55. Water flower beds and small areas by hand to avoid water sprayed on rocks, sidewalks and non-plant areas.
56. Only use irrigation systems for large grassy zones. For those areas, upgrade or adjust (if necessary) to sprinkler heads that only spray where needed. Ongoing water on fences or sides of homes can deteriorate wood over time.
57. Put Xeriscape friendly scrubs and tall grasses along steep inclines or small, isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways – lose the grass – it's hard to mow and water there anyway.
58. Install a rain shut-off valve or rain sensors on automatic sprinklers to eliminate wasted watering.

59. Tell your homeowners association to get rain or moisture sensors if you see them wasting water on days that don't need watering.
60. Report any community irrigation water leaks or defective sprinklers you may see at greenbelts, parks, schools, churches and business areas.
61. Aerate your lawn spring and fall. It's important to pull 'plugs' in the lawn about six inches apart and 2-1/2 to 3" deep so water will reach the roots rather than run off the surface. Anything less will not produce an effective aeration and should be re-done.
62. Plant during the spring or fall when watering requirements to establish new plants are lower in more weather-friendly times of the year.
63. Make sure your lawn mower blades are at a higher setting (one or two notches up) during hot months. Longer grass shades root systems better and holds soil moisture longer than a closely clipped lawn. (Relax: you won't need to cut as often!) Saves 500 to 1,500 gallons each month!
64. Readjust your watering schedule to the season month by month and according to rainfall. As temperatures change, don't just 'set it and forget it.'
65. Especially for those communities on watering restrictions, get the most out of your watering time. Water overnight between 11pm-sunrise and never when windy. This way, the water will go where intended most effectively and with the least amount of evaporation from the sun. Early morning watering prevents fungus and saves 300 gallons!
66. To be most water-effective, divide your watering cycle into 2 shorter periods, instead of one long cycle. This allows for better absorption into the soil and roots where needed instead of creating excess runoff.
67. Mulch. Mulch. Mulch. We can't emphasize enough how wonderful mulch is for plant growth and water efficiency. Use a layer (3-4") of organic mulch around flowering plants, trees (form a large circle to its drip line), and shrubs. You'll save 750 to 1,500 gallons of water each month during peak growth season and provide your landscape with much needed moisture protection! (ask your local nursery for the type of mulch that works best in your area).
68. Remember to check your sprinkler system valves for leaks and keep the heads in good shape. (especially right after lawn aeration).

69. Save over 500 gallons of water each year by just modifying water-thirsty flowers and shrubs with low water use plants. Many offer year-round landscape color and greater architectural garden structure.
70. Choose a water-efficient drip irrigation system for trees, shrubs and flower beds. Watering at root level (used in many arid climates) is the most effective way to get water to the plant's roots directly. Because it's a straight shot, be careful not to over-water! Nurseries and home garden centers carry do-it-yourself systems that are easy to install.
71. Group plants that have similar watering needs together. You'll be amazed how many beautiful choices there are today that are Xeric-friendly! Shop for X-rated, XX-rated and XXX-rated varieties.
72. When you water plants, give them a good healthy drink, but less often. This creates a stronger, longer root system less dependent on water just beneath the surface.
73. For outdoor hanging baskets, planters and pots, place ice cubes under the moss or dirt to give your plants a cool drink in summer and help eliminate water from overflowing. A great, easy thing to do when entertaining outside and the party's over.
74. When watering grass on steep slopes, use a soaker hose to prevent wasteful runoff.
75. When the kids need a cool down on a hot summer's day, use the sprinkler in an area where your lawn needs it the most. Then be sure keep it to a reasonable time frame and turn it off.
76. Use sprinklers that throw big drops of water close to the ground instead of higher up in the air.
77. Avoid buying recreational kid's water toys that require a constant flow of water.
78. Bathe pets outdoors in an area in need of water – pour out the tub water around trees and shrubs.
79. Lawn watering correctly can save thousands of gallons annually. You can actually train your turf to use less water by irrigating deeply and less often.
80. Use a screwdriver to test soil moisture. If it goes in easily, wait until the ground is drier before watering again.

81. Buy a rain gauge to track how much rainfall your yard receives. Just ½ inch of rain can eliminate the need for one or two irrigation cycles, depending on seasonal temperatures.
82. It's better to wash your car at a car wash that uses recycled water than to waste water running down your driveway.
83. If you absolutely must wash your car at home, consider washing it on the grass (unless HOA covenants prohibit that). Might as well do double duty if you can put all that water to good use.
84. And if you do wash your own car, use a bucket with a hose nozzle and turn off the water during the soaping stage. That can save you more than 100 gallons per car wash!
85. Did you know more plants die from OVER-WATERING than from under-watering? Understand the needs of your garden from the grass to the trees, to the specific flowers and shrubs and match their watering needs only to what Mother Nature does not provide.
86. Teach your family how to shut off your automatic irrigation system, especially if you know a storm is coming.
87. Wind and water is not "Feng Shui" for a garden. Be mindful to only water on calm days.
88. When to water the grass? Here's a simple tip: step on it. If you leave footprints, it's time to water. If you don't leave footprints, leave it alone. You can easily save 750 to 1,500 gallons per month in unnecessary watering.
89. Outdoor water features are nice, but avoid those that spray water up into the air. Trickling or cascading fountains lose and use less water to evaporation.
90. Make sure swimming pools, fountains and ponds are equipped with recirculating pumps. Inspect occasionally for clogs due to leaves, etc.
91. If you have an evaporative cooler, direct the water drain (and any other water drainage gutters or pipes) to a flowerbed, tree, or your lawn.
92. Leave the flower branches on trees and shrubs and allow leaf litter to accumulate on top of the soil. This keeps the soil cooler, adds natural nutrients to the soil, and reduces evaporation.



93. Fertilizers promote plant and grass growth which increases water need. If you know rain is imminent, let Mother Nature help by fertilizing right before it rains.
94. Winterize outdoor spigots before cold season to prevent pipes from bursting or freezing. Do not jump on the early spring impulse to hook up hoses too soon after winter. March and April can still freeze at certain elevations.
95. As much as possible, create a landscape that is native to your area. There are so many natural choices of flowering, drought-tolerant plants of all shapes and sizes, making it really is easy and fun to be water-efficient today. Take a trip to your Botanic Gardens and local nurseries. Talk to experienced specialists. Find out what works. Then design a plan for your specific landscape and climate zone.
96. Compost! Add natural nutrients to your soil from the food you eat. Saves money – enriches your garden which makes it less water needy.
97. Water at a rate that your soil can absorb it evenly. Too fast or too much is too often ineffective.
98. Gardening stress relief tip: pull weeds regularly at a comfortable time of day. Easiest to do right after irrigation or a good rain.
99. Throw trimmings and peelings from fruits and vegetables into your yard compost to prevent from using the garbage disposal (and water) so often.
100. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways, sidewalks and the garage. Saves 80 gallons or more of water and its great upper body exercise!
101. Support projects and products that use reclaimed wastewater for irrigation and other uses.
102. If you live in a HOA covenant-controlled community, serve on the board or start a task force to help educate all residents on the importance of being water efficient.

**Lead the way and feel good about what you're doing!**

Also download: 7 Basic Xeriscape Principles – It's easy!