



The Malm-Cluett Team
 barbaramalm@jennypruitt.com

Jenny Pruitt & Associates
 404-310-5164

Atlanta's Drought

At Your Service UPDATE

Volume XII, Issue 3

While our lawmakers are working on a statewide water management plan, for both long-term and emergency, this issue will focus on what we as homeowners can do. It is possible to reduce our water bills (and consumption) by 50%, but some serious adjusting must be done. This newsletter is designed to help us all conserve one of our most crucial natural resources.

1. Collect and use **recycled water** for watering trees and plants. What are some creative ways to collect water for this purpose?
- in rain barrels
 - in buckets while we shower (more on this topic later)
 - from our outdoor A/C condensation pipe(s)
 - from dehumidifiers
 - from leftover bags of ice after a party
 - in the kitchen sink while washing dishes

- the importance of **preserving** Atlanta's character- our **trees**. Losing mature trees carries a cost to us all.
- 15% decrease in residential property value
 - Increased cooling expenses due to a loss of shade
 - Removal fees of up to \$1000 per dead tree

Fact: Fulton County reduced water use by 19% comparing Dec, 2006 to Dec, 2007.

Here are some **tree-watering tips:** (lawns & plants too)

- **When?** Late evening or early morning. Over 50% of water can be lost to evaporation during mid-day.
- **How often?** Trees benefit more from watering once a week, not every night.
- **How much?** Water slowly, but generously, so that water thoroughly penetrates the soil to about 1 foot deep, where the trees absorbing roots are located. Watering for short periods of time only encourages shallow rooting which can lead to more drought damage.

Learn some important facts about



- **Where?** The most efficient watering involves concentrating the water from the drip line to within three feet of the base.
- **Mulch?** Yes, mulch slows evaporation and helps prevent water run-off.

Fun Fact: Trees and plants don't mind a little soap!



Plant your garden and pots with proper soil preparation, conditioners, and hardy plants needing less water. Your favorite garden center can help with products that actually retain water. Here are some specific plant ideas:

- **Herbs:** thyme, oregano, rosemary
- **Flowers & pot "fillers":** geraniums, verbena, lantana, angel wing begonias, begonias, asparagus fern, coleus, licorice plant, melanpodium, cedum, fennel, and mondo grass

Fun Fact: An average urban tree requires 15 gallons of water per week. This is the same

amount of water used for 2 toilet flushes.

Install low-flow toilets. The 1.28 gallon are the most efficient, and at Lowe's the cost ranges from \$222 to \$253. The installation (at Lowe's) is \$104. This cost can vary according to the plumber. As of Jan 1, 2008, Dekalb County is offering a \$100 credit, and other counties will most likely soon follow suit. For more information on the rebate go to dekalbwatershed.com

No-flush toilets Use that shower bucket water to flush! This works even with the master upstairs; we're not about to haul the water downstairs in a 5 gallon bucket to water plants. But in the master bathroom, it's easy- and simply learning a new habit. Pour the water from the bucket all at once; a slow drizzle doesn't get the job done. One half of a 5 gallon bucket works fine; practice makes perfect!

Low-flow showers- Again, you can use that plumber for 2 jobs- or simply turn off the shower while you lather up- it's not that difficult. Also, one can use that water bucket while shaving legs instead of letting the shower continue to run. It's an easy way to rinse off the razor.

Don't wash cars. Let a bit of mud or dirt be a badge of honor. Keep the inside clean by vacuuming.

Fix leaks. Here's a third job for that plumber!

The government can do only so much; limits can be imposed, but true compliance is unenforceable. Let's all do our part, pitch in, and be proud of our personal results.

Further, make it fun, and share what worked with your neighbors and friends.

Fact: Expression "down to the dregs" refers to dirty, bacteria-filled water close to the bottom of a reservoir or lake.

News Update: The governor lifted the statewide ban on landscape watering. Professional landscaping can be watered on odd-even days, for a limited period of time, and homeowners can hand-water their flowers. For details and up-to-date reports check out 1alive.com or your county government website, as restrictions can vary per county.

