

Arrowsic may be surrounded by water, but that doesn't mean there is an unlimited supply for our personal needs and wants—not to mention the other living things that depend on water. Consider this. Every year for the last decade, Maine has seen conditions that ranged from abnormally dry to drought. In 2020 areas of the state experienced extreme drought conditions. (Check out [this site](#), if you are interested in learning more about current and past drought conditions in Maine.)

While we can't change the weather, we can change some of our habits to be more mindful about our water usage year round. This may help dampen the effects of the next dry spell.

Fun fact: According to [the U.S. Geological Survey](#), the average person uses as much as 80 to 100 gallons of water every day.

Read on for some simple tips. While not all of these may be practical for you, even making one or two changes can make a difference. Every drop in the bucket helps!

#### *In the home*

- Shorten your showers, and consider installing a low-flow shower head. If you are feeling ambitious, keep a shower bucket handy to collect water while you wait for it to heat up. This is clean water that you can use to wash dishes or water plants.
- Shut the water off while you are brushing your teeth. Similarly, shut the water while soaping up your hands for the recommended 20 seconds.
- Completely fill the dishwasher and washing machine before running them.
- Fill your sink with water when handwashing dishes, rather than letting the faucet run. (There are a lot of variables at play when weighing whether the dishwasher or handwashing is greener. For more on that debate, [click here](#).)
- [Fix leaky faucets and toilets](#). A faucet dripping at a rate of one drop per second can waste upwards of eight to nine gallons a day. A leaky toilet can waste about [26 gallons](#) per day.
- In the summer, fill a pitcher of water to keep in the refrigerator, rather than running the tap until the water cools down.

#### *For your lawns and gardens*

- Avoiding watering during the heat of the day and when it is windy. Water will evaporate much faster in these conditions, and your thirsty plants will benefit less.
- Direct the water to only where it needs to go. Don't water your driveway!
- Choose native plants over exotic, ornamental plants that may require more water to survive.

- Mulch around your plants to reduce evaporation and keep in the moisture. Mulch will also help keep out the weeds, which will compete with the plants you want for water.
- Collect rain in a rain barrel, and use the water for your plants. Note that rain barrel water should be used with some caution. For best practices, click [here](#). You can [make your own](#) rain barrel or purchase one at a local hardware or garden store.
- During dry spells, prioritize outdoor water use. For example, consider not watering your lawn in favor of watering plants that produce food.

Click [here](#) for more great tips on ways to conserve water.