

Living Green is making choices in our day-to-day lives that reduce our impact on the environment and move us in the direction of a sustainable lifestyle – one that is healthy, ecologically sound, economically viable and socially just.

## A GREEN HOME BEGINS WITH WATER

### Contents

- A Green Home Begins With Water
- Grasscycling
- Raised Bed Gardening
- Drip Irrigation
- Upcoming Events

World population is quickly reaching seven billion; one of the most important ways to reduce the environmental impact of each household is to be better users of water. Even in the northwest where water is abundant, more will be needed for agriculture and drinking and everyone will need to reduce wasteful habits. Some simple things are to not let water run in the bathroom or kitchen while brushing teeth and doing dishes. Fixing leaks inside and out is also easy ways to save water. The following list is from Josh Peterson writing for Planet-Green.Discovery.com. The household areas listed below are in order of water usage with their average gallons of water used per day.

### Outdoor Water Usage: 112 Gallons a day

The per-capita average for outdoor water use is around 112 gallons a day. With all that water going towards your yard, it should be the first place where changes are made.

- Fix leaks. A majority of

homes are leaking ten gallons a day. But a few houses are leaking 100 gallons or more a day.

- Use a rain gauge. The average lawn needs one inch of water per week to survive. Most lawns are simply over-watered.



Thomas Barwick/Getty Images

- Use Gray Water on Lawns; replumbing would be required. Soaps may damage plants, so try environmentally friendly brands.
- Water early in the morning to avoid evaporation.
- A cistern can be used to collect water, and it can be used for in house non-potable use.
- Have your lawn xeriscaped, or landscape with native plants.

### The Toilet: 18.5 gallons a day per person. 26.7 percent of indoor water use.

The toilet comes in at number two. Some say "If it's yellow let it mel-

low," but there are other methods available.

- Displace water in the toilet tank with a toilet dam or a weight.
- Use gray water in the toilet tank; replumbing is required.
- Buy a water-efficient toilet.

### The Clothes Washer: 15 gallons a day per person. 21.7 percent of indoor water use.

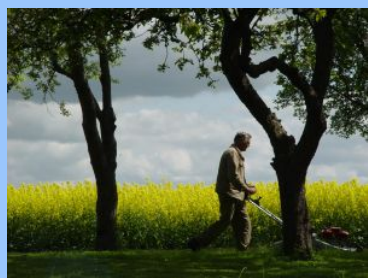
The clothes washer is the next biggest offender. And going to the laundry mat doesn't get you off the hook. You're still using water. Here is how to use less of it.

- Wash clothes less often. They should be washed as needed. This will make your

"Outdoor water use is around 112 gallons a day. With all that water going towards your yard, it should be the first place where changes are made."



## GRASSCYCLING



Credit unknown

What does “grasscycling” mean? It is the practice of leaving grass clippings on the lawn when mowing.

Forget those long-held beliefs that grass clippings left on a lawn smother the grass underneath or cause thatch. Thatch is caused by excessive growth from over fertilizing, by allowing grass to get too high before mowing, or by incorrect watering.

Grass clippings are actu-

ally good for the lawn and will reduce fertilization demand by about 25%. When grass clippings decay naturally on the lawn, they release valuable nutrients, add water-saving mulch and encourage earthworms which naturally aerate soil. For compacted soil that does not absorb water easily, the clippings add organic material to help it absorb water quicker and hold it longer.

Grasscycling also reduces the time spent mowing by 50%. Half the job and half the strain is from bagging clippings. It will also save time spent on fertilizing.

### Grasscycling; Here’s How:

- Remove no more than 1/3 of the leaf blade with each mowing.
- Mow when the lawn is dry.
- Use a sharp mower blade.
- Aerate. In the spring, rent an aerator which removes cores of soil from the lawn. This opens up the soil and permits greater movement of water, fertilizer, and air by increasing the speed of decomposition of the grass clippings and enhancing deep root growth.

Water thoroughly when needed. During the driest period of summer, bluegrass lawns require at least one inch of water every five to six days.

Grasscycling is a responsible environmental practice and an easy opportunity for all homeowners to reduce their waste. And the best part is that it takes less time and energy than bagging and dragging that grass to the curb.



Common Houseplants that purify air and reduce exposure to home pollutants. P. 3

## ARE YOU INTERESTED IN RAISED BED GARDENING?

A raised bed garden is a garden built on top of your native soil. Raised beds make gardening possible on sites where growing plants would otherwise be impossible. Rooftop gardens and raised beds on top of solid rock are examples.

**•Better drainage**  
Raised beds permit plant roots to develop in soil held above water-logged or compacted zones. This is ideal for better root growth.

**•Higher yields** Healthier roots lead to higher

yields for food crops and lush growth of ornamental plantings.

- **Extended growing season**
- **Easier Maintenance**  
Less stooping is required for maintenance. Intensively planted beds provide dense foliage cover, shading out weeds.

The WSU Spokane County Extension is offering a **Beginning Gardening** series of 4 classes in March from 10 am-12 noon. Topics include: Soil and Basic Gardening Practices,

Growing Vegetables, Easy Flowers, and Lawn & Garden Maintenance.

They also offer a **Grow Your Own Food** series of 4 classes held on April 4, 11, 18, and May 2, from 10 am – 12 noon. Topics include: Culinary Herbs, Home Fruit, Heirloom Vegetables, and **Raised Bed Gardening**.

**Each series** of 4 classes costs \$35, or \$10 each class. Registration is required. For more information <http://www.spokane-county.wsu.edu/spokane/>



## Plants and Clean Air

The book "How To Grow Fresh Air" by B. C. Wolverton explains the study of plants to remove chemicals from indoor air and how they improve air quality. It shows how to care for 50 individual plants and which chemicals they are best at combating.

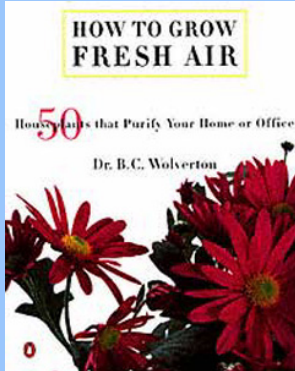
Pollutants enter our homes in a variety of ways. Volatile Organic

Compounds (VOC's) off-gas from paint and building products, carbon monoxide from gas appliances, pesticides are tracked in on our shoes. Even Teflon treated cookware releases dangerous chemicals when overheated.

The book, which is available in the library, is based on a study by NASA. The intent was to find ways to purify air for astronauts in space stations, but the study proved useful on Earth as well.

Common plants such as English ivy, gerbera daisies, pot mums, peace lily, bamboo palm, Mother-in-law's Tongue and spider plant are best in treating air contaminated with Benzene, Trichloroethylene from dry-cleaning, Formaldehyde, and others.

Many plants can be easily propagated from cuttings. Keep plants in the areas you hang out in the most.



Drip irrigation is the slow and precise delivery of water to chosen plantings. It uses flexible polyethylene tubing with emitters for dripping water and low-volume spray heads. The systems are easy to install, require no trenching, and they save a lot of water.

In many rural areas of Spokane County, groundwater is being used faster than it can be recharged. The West Plains is an area of particular concern as are areas in North Spokane County. The Spokane Aquifer is heavily used resulting in a drop in the water level of the Spokane River, causing water quality problems such as algae blooms and low dissolved oxygen.

## DRIP IRRIGATION



How to install drip irrigation. [ThisOldHouse.com](http://ThisOldHouse.com)

plants with drip irrigation reduces the amount of water-borne pests and fungal diseases that spread by water movement. It also inhibits germination of weeds between plants.

**•Versatility:** Low volume irrigation systems are great for both new and existing landscapes. They are also ideal for difficult terrain such as sloped areas or sites with high winds.

**•Economy:** Drip irrigation will save money on the water utility bill and electricity from pumping costs when compared to a conventional sprinkler system.

### Benefits of Drip Irrigation

**•Water Efficiency:**

Drip irrigation applies water only when and where it is needed and reduces runoff and evaporation.

**•Ease of installation:**

Installation is a very simple process, no special tools or glue is needed.

**•Fewer pests and**

**weeds:** Watering only the roots zone of

## A Green Home, cont'd

•clothes last longer as well.

•Replace top-loading washing machines with newer, front-loading machines. Or opt for a state-of-the-art water-saving model.

•Wash your hats with the dishes. You can also wash sponges, rags, mittens and sneakers on the top shelf of your dishwasher.

The dishwasher uses

considerably less water than the clothes washer. In fact, the dishwasher didn't even make the [EPA's list](#). It only uses one gallon of water a day per person, only 0.06 percent of the entire indoor and outdoor home water use.

**The Shower: 11.6 percent gallon per person. 16.8% of indoor water use.**

•Take shorter showers or shower less often.

Using shower timers can help the family to compete for short showers or at least count how many gallons are used per minute. (Refer to your showerhead for its GPM.)

•Install a low-flow shower head.

•Reduce baths or cut them out entirely. They use too much water.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**3/3 "Smart Cycling – Traffic Skills 101"** at Spokane Regional Health District. Registration includes book and Bicycle Alliance of WA membership \$30. 5:15pm, Contact [SpokaneBikeBuddy@aol.com](mailto:SpokaneBikeBuddy@aol.com).

**3/7 Second Chance Kitchen Sale** for Slow Food Spokane River 9am-2pm; Thomas Hammer Coffee Headquarters, 210 W. Pacific Ave. in Downtown Spokane. 9am-2pm, visit their site <http://groups.google.com/group/SF-SpokaneRiverInfo>

**3/7, 14, 21, & 28 Spring Gardening Classes** by WSU Spokane County Extension **Beginning Gardening** classes are: Soil and Basic Gardening Practices, Growing Vegetables, Easy Flowers, Lawn & Garden Maintenance. 10am-12pm; \$35 series, or \$10 per class.

**3/10, 4/14 Green Drinks** 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays each month. At Zola in March and at Neato Burrito in April. 5:30-on.

**3/13 Food, Farmers, and Fairs:** Their Role in Building Sustainable Neighborhoods, by Project HOPE, Riverfront Farms, and Green Jobs Not

Jails. Join the Potluck and stay for discussion by Amy Grey, founder of Backyard Harvest, and Jackie Aitchison, Poulosbo Farmers Market Director and Executive Director of the Washington State Farmers Market Association. At the Eco House, 2605 W. Boone. 6-8pm; visit: [www.projecthopespokane.com](http://www.projecthopespokane.com)

**3/17 Winona LaDuke** Founding Director for White Earth Land Recovery Project. at SFCC 11:30am-1pm and at the Magic Lantern at 7:30pm; Free. [www.NativeHarvest.com](http://www.NativeHarvest.com)

**3/28 Earth Hour** Cities across the globe will shut off lights for one hour at 8:30pm. [EarthHour.org](http://EarthHour.org)

**4/4, 11, 18, & 5/2 Spring Gardening Classes** by WSU Spokane County Extension. **Grow Your Own Food** classes are: Culinary Herbs, Home Fruit, Heirloom Vegetables, Raised Bed Gardening. 10am-12pm; \$35 series, or \$10 per class.

**4/10 Suzuki Mini-Sustain It Film Festival** at the Magic Lantern. Viewing "Journey into

New Worlds", "The Matrix of Life", "The Fire of Creation", "Coming Home". With food from Sante and Natural Start Bakery, One World Spokane. 6:30-10:30

**4/18** David Suzuki comes to Spokane to talk sustainability, earth justice, earth respect. Get Lit 2009 David Suzuki and William Dietrich at the Bing Crosby Theater. 8pm; \$20 (\$10 students)

**4/18 Unveil the Trail** volunteer with Friends of the Centennial Trail to clean up the trail. 9am-12pm; Contact Kaye Turner to participate 624-7188 Or day of the event 999-3380

**4/22 Earth Day** (official)

**4/25 Arbor Day Compost Fair** at Finch Arboretum, 11am-2pm. Contact 625-6800.

**4/26 Earth Day Celebration** Enjoy the wrap up of a week long celebration for Earth Day, Sunday in Riverfront Park. 12-5pm.

**4/28 Spokane Youth Environmental Conference** at SCC, 8am-1:30pm



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