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May Water Matters

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Water Matters



Why Conserving Water Matters

Tucsonans take pride in using water wisely, adopting Sonoran Desert-friendly lifestyles that make us one of the most water-efficient communities in the West. But when big things are happening like drought and warmer temperatures, we may sometimes wonder if our own individual efforts to save water really matter. Here's a look across the decades at how important our actions are and will continue to be as responsible Sonoran Desert dwellers.

Past: Over the last 25 years, our customers have reduced the amount of water they use by an average of 30% per person. Thanks to your conservation efforts and the growth of the Tucson's reclaimed water system, today we use the same amount of drinking water we did in the 1980s – despite serving 200,000 more people.

Present: We depend on the Colorado River as our primary water supply. In recent years, Tucson Water customers have used only about two-thirds of our annual share of river water. If we used the same amount per person as we did 25 years ago, we'd be using our entire yearly Colorado River allocation. Using less has allowed our community to store several years' supply in our aquifers for the future and leave water in Lake Mead to preserve the health of the river system. Most importantly, it means we can take future cuts to river supplies and sustainably thrive as a city.

Future: Tucson Water's *One Water 2100 Plan*, adopted by Tucson's Mayor and Council in 2023, lays out strategies for our community to prosper over the long term while stewarding our precious water resources. The plan accounts not only for a hotter and drier future where less Colorado River water is available, but also for a thriving, growing economy and community. \ In the plan, this scenario is called a "Sustainable Oasis."

One Water 2100 calls for increasing use of underutilized resources like recycled water and stormwater, but it also counts on conservation and efficiency improvements by customers, with a goal of further reducing per-person water use 20% in the coming decades. To that end, Tucson Water is working to help customers become even more efficient, installing meters that provide more frequent usage information, offering new rebate options, and researching new conservation technologies that can be used in the community.

This is where each of us – the customers – come in. When we make individual efforts to fix leaks, install efficient appliances, plant and water smartly, it adds up, ultimately making the vision of a Sustainable Oasis possible.

One Water Tucson



Happy Roots Start with Mulch

Organic mulch is a layer of material – such as wood chips, bark, or leaves, commonly placed on top of soil around plants. It plays a vital role in maintaining plant health and can cut outdoor watering by 25-50%.

Moisture Retention

Applying mulch creates a protective layer that helps retain moisture by reducing evaporation, allowing plants to use water more efficiently.

Soil Temperature Regulation

Mulch helps regulate soil temperature by keeping roots cooler during extreme heat and provides insulation during cooler nights, creating a more stable environment for plant growth. This is especially important for desert-adapted and newly established plants, which can be sensitive to temperature fluctuations.

Improves Soil Health

Mulch also improves soil health over time. Organic mulches, such as wood chips or bark, break down gradually and add nutrients to the soil, enhancing its structure and ability to retain moisture. This leads to stronger root systems and healthier plants overall.

Reduces Weeds

Another key benefit is weed suppression. By blocking sunlight, mulch reduces weed growth which means less competition for water and nutrients. This not only supports

growth, which means less competition for water and nutrients. This not only supports plant health but also reduces maintenance needs.

Easy to Apply

For best results in the Sonoran Desert, apply a 2–3 inch layer of mulch around plants, keeping it a few inches away from stems and trunks. Incorporating mulch into your landscape is a simple, effective way to support thriving plants while using water wisely.

Where to Buy

Most local nurseries and home improvement stores offer a variety of mulches that can be purchased by the bag. If you're looking for a large quantity, there are local distributors that recycle green waste and sell products like mulch and wood chips in bulk.

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YOUR BILL**



**REBATES & INCENTIVES
SAVE WATER & MONEY**

City of Tucson Environmental Services



Compost Awareness Week

Compost Awareness Week is this May 3-9! Join the City of Tucson's FoodCycle at Home program and turn your food scraps into nutrient-rich compost for our community. It's easy, collect your food waste and drop it off at designated sites to help reduce landfill waste and support local sustainability efforts.

Get involved by attending an upcoming training.

[Upcoming Trainings](#)

Pima County Wastewater Reclamation



Is it Drain Safe?

What do paper towels, wet wipes, medications, cotton swabs, grease and oil, dental floss, cat litter and diapers have in common? All of these things should never be flushed down the toilet or allowed to go down the drain. They can cause problems for your plumbing, the sewer system, and the environment.

Learn more about keeping your pipes safe.

[Protect our Pipes](#)



Water Matters is a monthly newsletter brought to you by Tucson Water

Tucson Water is a department of the City of Tucson



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