

Albemarle County Service Authority celebrates Drinking Water Week with a call to action for local residents. We call on the local community to help protect and preserve our most valuable natural resource – drinking water.

National Drinking Water Week reminds us of the essential role we can all play in our lives to conserve our drinking water supply. We all share in the benefits of the world's safest, purest drinking water. By making simple changes in our daily routines, we can all contribute to protecting this resource for future generations.

Only one percent of the earth's water is available for human consumption and yet, according to the latest U.S. Geological Survey, the United States uses 408 billion gallons a day. On the industrial level, numerous water-saving technologies have been employed to help conserve water. And while strong progress has been made, there are several simple steps that consumers can take to help protect our water supply.

Last month ACSA announced a contest that rewarded the best story of conservation with a free rain barrel. The winning entry is from local citizen, Sandra Smith, who creatively provided "ideas to live by when it comes to conserving the precious resource of water." Congratulations to Sandra for a great submission that provides so many ways for us all to conserve.

CONSERVE WATER

Collection system. Focus on creating a system to catch and hold water safely, ensuring your collection medium is not attracting harmful insects such as mosquitoes or allowing excessive evaporation.

Obligation. Get every family member to agree to use water conservatively and to treat it as the precious resource that it is. It's our obligation.

Necessary. Use only as much water as is necessary. This might include fewer flushings; never throwing away ice or half-drunk glasses of water out---use it to water plants; increasing weeks between car washings; conscientious laundry usage; using water to cook pasta that was first used to cook vegetables (flavors pasta a little too!); ask for water at restaurants only if you truly intend to drink it; otherwise, tell you waiter "no water, please," and so on.

Shade. Place potted plants in cooler, partially shaded areas to reduce the need for watering.

Estimate low. Estimate on the low side how much water that you think you'll need to accomplish a task such as dishwashing, laundry, cleaning outdoor furniture, etc. You can always add water if you need more.

Reminders. Post consciousness-raising notes on refrigerator, bathroom mirrors and the like: "Use water as if it could be gone in a week."

Vigilant. Be vigilant when it comes to checking for faucet leaks, drains that slowly release water causing you to refill basins and tubs more frequently, outside hose and

water hook-ups, along with ensuring toilets are running efficiently and not wasting water due to mechanical problems. Repair any problems immediately.

Edit. Edit your gardens to ensure that you have drought tolerant plants that require little water in addition to periodic rainfalls.

Weed control. Remove thirsty weeds that take moisture away from our annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees to reduce the need for watering.

Attention. Pay attention to water usage. Be conscious of water running in sinks and tubs and run only what you need.

Tubful. Keep a tubful of water in the sink and rinse dirty dishes in it before placing in dishwasher instead of running water unnecessarily to rinse every fork, spoon, plate and pot. Also, hand wash as many dishes as you can in-between dishwasher use to reduce the need for water-hungry loads.

Emergency planning. In anticipation of potential electrical outages, bottle water reserved from rainfall for flushing and cleaning during emergencies.

Rainfall. Collect rain and snowfall throughout the year and use this water for plants and cleaning outdoor surfaces.