

Water saving in the garden

make
every drop
matter

*Yes you
can*
Water
a YTL company

Every drop matters



Water is precious. When it comes to looking after our beloved gardens, we believe every drop matters.

Nobody likes to think they are using water excessively, particularly customers on a meter whose bills are directly affected. And we all have a responsibility to look after an essential global resource.

In spring and summer our gardens become thirsty, but if you water wisely it is possible to care for your plants and the environment at the same time.

You can also make your garden more water efficient by taking some very simple steps, such as choosing plants that thrive in dry weather and ensuring you conserve rainwater.

5 top tips for saving water in the garden

- 1 Water your plants in the mornings and evenings when it is cool – less will be lost through evaporation.
- 2 Use a watering can – sprinklers are wasteful.
- 3 Recycle your water – use cooled bath water on your plants or buy a water butt to capture rain.
- 4 Try planting trees or shrubs to provide extra shade, or use hedges and climber-covered trellises to form cool green walls.
- 5 Check the weather forecast before watering – it might rain tomorrow!

Planting advice

Before deciding what to plant, it is worth considering what plants will be suitable in your garden. It makes sense to plant species that are native to your local area, so take a look at neighbouring gardens to see which plants are flourishing.

Don't plant too early in the year when it is cold and wet. May onwards is normally ideal.

Ensure your soil is healthy and well balanced as it enables plants to establish deep, vigorous roots that provide a firm anchor in the ground. Healthy soil will ensure good drainage and safeguard against plant roots becoming too wet or too dry. Sandy soils, for example, drain quickly, while clay soils can become waterlogged.

Condition your soil by adding organic matter such as compost or manure. It also improves drainage and helps feed your plants – you can add compost when preparing the soil for cultivation and also later as mulch.

Healthy soil will ensure good drainage and safeguard against plant roots becoming too wet or too dry

The first few weeks after planting are the most crucial for plants, so it's important to mix some planting compost with the soil – or garden compost – and keep it moist.

Covering the soil with a mulch after watering is vital. The most attractive mulches are bark or stone chips, which should be spread about two inches thick.

You can also use garden compost or even old carpet or newspaper, but you must remember to take that sort of material away when it rains or the water can't get through!





The right plants and shrubs



Growing vegetables

Many plants are naturally adapted to growing in dry weather, including some of the UK's most popular and familiar species. Here are a few examples:

Common sage

Suitable for sunny spots in a container or well-drained ground. You should water sage lightly until it is established, while pinching the tips will encourage bushy growth.



Lavender

All varieties love well-drained soil and can cope with hot summer conditions. Don't plant lavender too early in the year when it's cold and wet – May onwards is ideal.



Perovskia 'blue spire'

A combination of powder-blue flowers and silver foliage are a colourful addition to any garden. This Russian sage enjoys a sunny position in well-drained soil.



Geranium

These popular plants produce clusters of beautiful flowers on attractive, fragrant foliage. Capable of blooming all summer long, they are excellent as container plants for window boxes and borders.



Rosemary

This shrub thrives in sunny, sheltered locations and can cope with light watering. Clipping in late spring will make more shoots grow. Rosemary attracts bees and other pollinators.



Verbena

These plants are easy to grow and are tolerant of both heat and lack of water. They are well suited to patio or decking containers, window boxes or mass bedding.



Lemon thyme

Tough and durable, this shrub is easy to grow in rocky or sandy soil and enjoys full sun. It is perfect for edging or border fronts and releases a wonderful citrus scent.



Like all plants, vegetables need moisture at sowing time, and watering-in when they are transplanted.

Most vegetables need watering throughout the season, although potatoes and corn should only be watered as the fruit and tubers begin to swell. This is

signalled by flowers on the potato plants and tassels on corn cobs.

Broad beans should be watered as they begin to flower, when the flowers fade and when the pods swell. You should water French beans before and during sowing.

Crops which need little or no watering include:

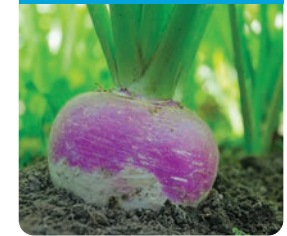
Carrots



Parsnips



Turnips



Beetroot



Sprouting broccoli



Onions



Shallots



Swedes



Asparagus



Watering

When it comes to watering, make sure your plants get a good drink. For most of them this means a thorough watering once a week rather than a sprinkling every day.



Water butts These have soared in popularity as a means of storing rainwater, which is not only free but is suitable for ericaceous (lime resistant) plants like camellias or rhododendrons. Fitting a diverter into the downpipe from your guttering will mean the maximum amount of rainwater is collected.

SwellGel If you're away a lot, or erratic with your watering, you should use water-retaining granules to mix with soil and compost. These can hold a considerable amount of water. You must mix the SwellGel granules with compost before you plant – they can't be used retrospectively.

Drip feeders These are a good way to keep your plants watered when you are away on holiday. They work by slowly dripping water directly to the plant roots.



Grey water Plants can be watered with bath, shower and kitchen water – collectively referred to as 'grey' water.

Washing your car

Did you know that washing your car could use as much as 300 litres of water?

Try using a noodle sponge wash mitt, which traps dirt particles between its microfibres and retains significantly more water than a regular sponge.

You should only use a hosepipe for rinsing, and using a trigger attachment allows you to control the flow of water.



Create a rain garden

A rain garden is a shallow depression or hole with absorbent but free-draining soil, planted with vegetation that can withstand occasional temporary flooding.

Rain gardens are designed to mimic the natural water retention of undeveloped land and to reduce the volume of rainwater running off into drains.

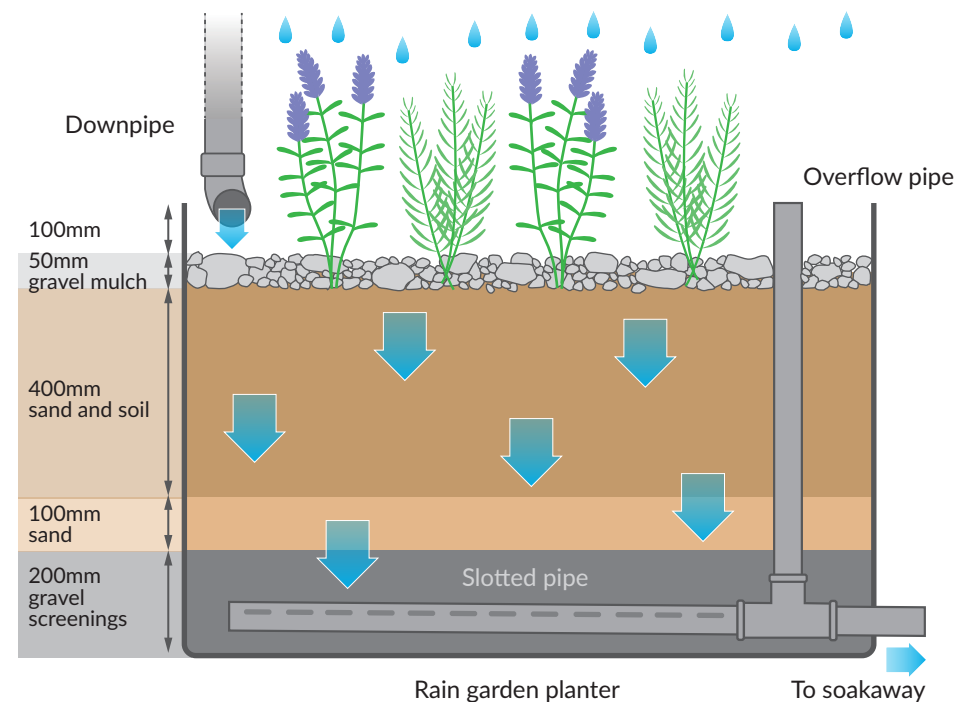
They collect rainwater from the downpipes of buildings or garden sheds. No redesign of the existing drainage system is required – rain gardens can be installed wherever space permits and in most soil types.

Why a rain garden?

Drains can become overwhelmed with water during heavy rain, leading to flooding. Run-off from roads can also wash oil, heavy metals and other pollutants into watercourses – potentially causing damage to the plants and animals that live in aquatic environments.

Rain gardens help our gardens to deal more effectively with rainfall, as well as filtering and cleaning run-off. They can also be planted to attract wildlife.

By increasing the amount of water entering the soil, rain gardens help to reduce the impact of low rainfall and avoid the need for irrigation.





Contact us

There are more tips for making your garden water efficient on our website.

For example, did you know that around 85,000 litres of water falls on your roof each year? Installing a water butt to collect rainwater could save up to 1,000 litres per year.

Our website also offers help and advice for saving water in your home – from simple tips like turning off the tap when brushing your teeth, to fixing household leaks.

And our supply customers can order a range of free water saving devices, including a Save-a-Flush bag for your toilet cistern and a ShowerSave regulator that could help you save up to eight litres per minute.

If you're on a meter, these devices could help cut your annual water and sewerage bill by up to 18% and even if you're not on a meter could help you save money on energy bills.

For free water saving devices visit

www.wessexwater.co.uk/savingwater

or call our partners Save Water Save Money on **0800 822 3922**
(Monday to Friday 9am to 5.30pm)

To apply for a meter visit

www.wessexwater.co.uk/meter

To report a leak visit

www.wessexwater.co.uk/leak

or call **0800 692 0 692** (24 hours)

For water supply or sewerage enquiries visit

www.wessexwater.co.uk/savingwater

or call **0345 600 4 600**

(Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, emergencies only at other times)