Ten Ways to Conserve Water

1) **Choose the right plant for the right place**
   All plants must get the right amount of sun, water, and nutrients to thrive—even natives.
   - Select plants suited for your area
   - Place plants in the landscape where site conditions match their needs
   - Group plants with similar water needs together

2) **Water thoughtfully**
   A drop here and a drop there can add up to a lot of water.
   - Always follow water restrictions
   - Water early in the morning
   - Irrigate plants and grass only when they start to wilt

3) **Handwater when possible**
   Handwatering is usually allowed during water restrictions, because it uses less water than an automatic irrigation system.
   - Use a watering can, pail, or hose with an automatic shutoff nozzle
   - Handwater potted plants, shrubs, trees, vegetables, and flower beds, and new lawns
   - See if your WMD limits handwatering

4) **Perform regular irrigation system maintenance**
   An irrigation system is only as efficient as it’s maintained to be.
   - Check for and repair leaks
   - Unclog and replace broken heads
   - Point heads at plants, not driveways and sidewalks

5) **Calibrate irrigation system**
   Even an efficient irrigation system can waste water if it’s left on for too long. The ideal amount of water to apply is 1/2-3/4 inch. Figure out how long to run your system by doing a test:
   - Place multiple coffee/tuna/other straight-sided cans throughout each irrigation zone
   - Run your system for thirty minutes
   - Average the depth of the water in all the containers
   - Multiply running time as needed for 1/2-3/4 inches of water

6) **Make a rain barrel**
   Rain barrels capture rainwater that flows off your roof for use in the landscape. They’re easy and inexpensive to make and can have a big impact on your water bill—instead of watering your plants with water you’re paying for, you’re using free water!

7) **Use microirrigation**
   Drip or microspray irrigation systems apply water directly to the roots of plants, where it’s needed, and lose minimal water to evaporation or wind drift.

8) **Mulch plants**
   Mulch helps keep moisture in the soil around your plants. Choose from many different kinds of mulch and apply 2 to 3 inches around trees, shrubs, flowers, and vegetables.

9) **Mow correctly**
   How you mow your lawn can have a big impact on how much water it needs.
   - Raise your mowing deck to promote a healthy root system
   - Keep your mower blades sharp; dull cuts make grass more disease-prone
   - Cut no more than a third of the leaf blade each time you mow

10) **Be a weather watcher**
    Rain is irrigation, too. Use it to your advantage—it’s free!
    - Don’t water your landscape if it’s rained in the past twenty-four hours
    - If rain is forecast in the next forty-eight hours, hold off on irrigating
    - Purchase a rain gauge to track how much rain your plants are getting
    - Install a rain shut-off device to override your irrigation system when it’s raining

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