

2021 California Drought & Water Conservation Strategies

Currently, California is in the midst of its worst drought since 2010. Nearly 95% of the state is in severe drought, while 33% is in exceptional drought, the highest level according to the National Integrated Drought Information System. After having the second driest rain season on record since 1850 last winter, conditions are ripe for another intense fire season. To mitigate these impacts and better prepare for another potential below-average rainfall next year, It is critical that we properly manage our water usage and conserve as much as possible.

Luckily, Martinez customers have already demonstrated their commitment to water conservation efforts. Over the last four years, our customers' average water use has decreased by 8.2% compared to 2013, despite a population increase during the same period of time. Now that we are facing serious drought once again, customers should reinforce their water conservation habits and consider trying new strategies. Below are some simple, cost-effective swaps and techniques for reducing water use at home.

Water Conservation at Home

1. Skip the rinse

- a. When doing the dishes, simply scrape off any excess food and put them straight into the dishwasher without rinsing first.

2. Put a bucket in the sink and/or shower

- a. The bucket will collect excess water that can then be used to water the plants or lawn.

3. Plant a native garden

- a. Many native Californian plants are not only drought resistant, but they also look beautiful, nurture local pollinators, and thrive better in the local environment.

4. Turn off the faucet

- a. Turn off the water in the sink or shower while brushing teeth, scrubbing your hands, washing fruit, shaving, or doing any task that doesn't warrant a constant flow of water.

5. Install low-flow fixtures

- a. Replace your showerhead with a water-saving alternative, which is usually affordable and easy to install.

6. Check for leaks

- a. Check toilets and faucets for leaks, both inside and outside the home. You can test your toilet by adding food coloring to the tank. If the color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak.

7. Water the garden when it's cool outside

- a. Only water your garden or lawn in the morning or evening, when there is less chance for evaporation. Also, water long enough so it goes deep enough to reach the roots so the plants benefit, instead of the water evaporating from the surface.

8. Keep a full bottle of water in the fridge

- a. Fill a water bottle with tap water and leave in the fridge for when you get thirsty. This will help avoid running the tap until the water gets cold enough to drink.