

Sustainability Sunday

Fact Sheet #2

5 things you can do: Water

It stands that even though we take it for granted water is a valuable and relatively limited resource. Most of the west doesn't generate water naturally it comes from dams and man made river systems. Over 97% of the water on earth is salt water, another 2% is in the form of glaciers and icecaps and only about 0.05 is water we can easily drink and maintain. This may not seem important but the fact is because of distribution problems and droughts caused by global warming water shortages are killing people right now and water shortage related deaths are only going to exponentially increase in the very near future. So what can you do to conserve water, and also save on water and energy costs?

1.

Stop buying fucking water bottles- I'm guilty-your guilty- we're all guilty. If you do obviously recycle them, however because of the sheer amount of plastic generated from bottled water industries alone the recycling efforts in effect do practically nothing so stop buying it period- Why? Well aside from the obvious lets have a look at this: FDA regulations as of 2009 recognize 9 different types of sold water they are: Artesian, Fluoridated, Ground, Mineral, Purified, Sparkling, Spring, Sterile, and Municipal- municipal being low to average tap water. 25% of bottled water was found to be municipal and sold at 240 to 10,000 times the cost of production. 50% of the rest still found chemicals, bacteria, and traces of plastic as well as arsenic. So what to do? Buy a water purification system- these come in many levels and varieties, the most economical and sensible being either a

refillable glass bottle system available at your local grocery store or a purifier that attaches to the faucet or sit in the fridge- However when doing these you need to know what your water has in it- buying a purifier that takes out things you don't have and leaves others in makes no sense. You can ask your water company for a consumer confidence report or a copy of their annual water quality report for free and go from there.

2.

Now how about your bathroom. The average American goes through 80 to 100 gallons of water a day, and in one year flushes 8,760 gallons down their toilets a year. Something simple you can do is fill a two liter bottle with small pebbles and water and place it in back of your toilet to displace some of that water. Hardware stores also offer low flow sink and shower heads that don't sacrifice pressure, and for the record you really don't need to shower 3 f-ing times a day. Finally when you use the sink don't leave it running- do you really need a steady stream of water while your toothbrush is in your mouth- Really?

3.

This Actually surprised me but apparently it is actually more energy efficient to use a dishwasher than to wash by hand. Make sure the washer is completely full each time you wash and be sure to do the pots and pans by hand. As for washing clothes you do not need hot water to do this so use cold, and install a clothes line in your backyard or apartment to dry them.

4.

This may require a little of the old handyman's approach but it goes for either home owners, renters or even those of you who live in apartment buildings and as for those who rent it's a great way to see if you can cut back on some rent by offering to do this for your landlord. Install an insulating jacket on your water heater- it's really as easy as it sounds. To find out if your water heater needs it feel it, if it's warm to the touch you need a jacket. To do this you can find precut jackets for around 10-20 bucks make sure it's at least an R-8. After putting this on make sure you insulate the first ten feet of pipe coming out of it and the top of the tank as well.

5.

This is pretty simple, capture rain water to use in things like washing your car or gardening. Ever think about household water? Did you know only 5% is used for drinking? To make a rainwater collection system all you really need is a few basic materials such as a couple 5 gallon buckets, tubing, carbon sand, and polyester fluff. All located at local hardware stores and material providers. You simply affix this system to your gutter spouts, more info at:

<http://www.baproducts.com/rainwatr.htm>

or

<http://www.biggerkeywaterfilters.com/>

These are all things that can be easily done with little or no cost to you, and in you get to feel better and safer about how you live. Good luck! Dane.