

TOWN OF CARSTAIRS

ENVIRONMENTAL HANDBOOK



RECYCLE DEPOT

229 9th Avenue North

(Town Shop Building)

Hours of Operation

Monday –Sunday

“24 hour drop off”

What Can You Recycle at the Carstairs Recycling Centre

- **PAPER**

White with black print

lined/unlined with pen or colored ink

envelopes with stamp

colored ledger/office paper with black or colored ink

computer paper

fax paper

- **PLASTIC JUGS**

All plastics including water bottles and plastic bags

- **NEWSPRINT**

All types of newspapers, flyers, stapled magazines and catalogues

- **CARDBOARD**

Collapse all boxes

- **CANS**

Paint (household quantities only), paint cans, tin cans

- **BATTERIES**

Car batteries only

- **BOTTLES, CANS, JUICE BOXES & PROPANE BOTTLES**

Fas Gas & Bottle Depot Monday - Saturday 10:00 am-5:00 pm

- **TIRES**

Return old tires to the business where you purchased your new tires. There is no charge.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE INFORMATION

A Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day is scheduled annually. Watch the Carstairs Courier for the ad or call 337-3341.

- Pouring hazardous waste down the drain may corrode plumbing, release toxic fumes, poison septic tanks, destroy sewage works organisms and contaminate both surface and ground water.
- Putting hazardous wastes out for garbage collection may result in injury to sanitation crews and the contamination of water supplies.
- Direct disposal in the ground or pouring hazardous wastes on the surface may contaminate the soil and local surface ground water.

HAZARDOUS WASTES INCLUDE:

- Corrosive materials: battery acids, drain cleaners, oven cleaners
- Toxic materials: pesticides, pharmaceuticals, cleaning fluids
- Reactive materials: ammonia, bleach, pool chemicals
- Flammable materials: gasoline, paints, oils
- Other materials: cosmetics, glues, batteries, propane tanks, sharps
(Needles and syringes in rigid containers only)

USED MOTOR OIL

- Can be taken to Koch Fuels (Industrial Park). Plastic oil containers accepted also.

USED COOKING OIL

Can be recycled at your local restaurants here in town. Restaurants have their used oil trucked away to a processing plant in Calgary. The oil must be liquid. At the process plant the oil is treated and impurities are shipped away to be used as livestock feed supplements and bio diesel products.

Waste Transfer Site

Transfer Site

Mountain View Waste Management Commission for further information

Call (403) 335-2005

- Refuse shall only be accepted from residents of Carstairs and the surrounding area of the County serviced by the Carstairs Recreation and Fire districts.

Reuse Tips

- Donate your old clothing and reusable toys to the local IODE thrift store.
- Books and magazines - share with friends or donate to the Library, Lodge, schools, or recycle at the recycle depot.
- Reuse plastic bags, margarine tubs, jars and other containers for storing food, detergent and miscellaneous articles (nails, paper clips, pencils and screws).
- Take wire coat hangers back to the dry cleaners.
- Check with your local school, play school, Brownies Cubs, etc., to see if they can use your fabric remnants, ribbons, Christmas cards, toys, colored paper, gift wrap and magazines for arts and crafts projects.
- Try a yard/garage sale for those items you can no longer use.
- Get into the habit of using cloth bags for your groceries.

GRASS CYCLING

Grass cycling is the process of recycling grass clippings by leaving them on your lawn. It saves time, reduces waste and leads to a deeper, healthier root system that increases your lawn's resistance to disease, drought, and insects.

Grass cycling improves lawn quality. When grass clippings are allowed to decay naturally on the lawn, they release valuable nutrients, add water-saving mulch and encourage natural soil aeration by earthworms.

Grass cycling saves time and work. A recent study in the United States found that 147 homeowners who quit bagging their clippings saved an average of 35 minutes per mowing. That's an average of seven hours per season or a day at the beach.

All lawnmowers can grass cycle, no special mower is necessary. For best results, keep the mower blade sharp and mow only when the grass is dry.

Grass clippings are a free, high-nitrogen fertilizer. When clippings decompose, they release their nutrients back to the lawn. They contain nitrogen, potassium and phosphorous, as well as lesser amounts of other essential plant nutrients. When left on the lawn, clippings are rapidly broken down into these nutrients, which are returned to the lawn. There is no polluting run-off, no use of non-renewable resources and no damage to soil, organisms or wildlife.

Grass cycling means that there is no need to spend tax dollars hauling to the landfill. The cost of trucking grass clippings to landfill sites comes out of residents' taxes. This is a wasteful practice as all those nutrient-rich clippings could be fertilizing people's lawns, thereby saving money on fertilizers and water bills. Tax dollars could be spent on services and programs rather than on the labour, trucks, fuel and precious compost site space used in municipal composting programs.

Do not cut more than one-third of the grass blade.

Cut regularly. If the grass is long, cut off short amounts in several mows rather than all at once. Cutting too short and not often enough are common errors of lawn care.

Use any kind of mower, but make sure it has a sharp blade.

Mow only when the grass is dry. Never mow during a drought.

Prevent excessive grass growth by watering in moderation, every five or six days. Fertilize in moderation as well. Allow grass clippings to dry in the sun before adding to compost. Otherwise, the clippings will mat and can become smelly.

TIPS FOR REDUCING YOUR CONSUMPTION RIGHT AWAY

Like charity, water conservation begins at home. There are dozens of ways to conserve water around the house. As a starting point, here are some of the easiest ways to reduce water use at home. These should be part of your everyday routine, not just precautionary measures in times of drought or restoration.

- Start by changing your attitude toward water. Begin treating water as a precious commodity.
- Flush the toilet every second time when possible.
- Adjust the level in your toilet tank to reduce use.
- Don't run the tap full bore to brush your teeth or wash your face or hands. Turn off the tap when you are not actually using the water, or reduce it to a trickle.
- Have one or two fewer showers or baths each week.
- Wear clothing two or more times if possible before washing it.
- Wash your hands with the temperature of water that comes out of the tap. Don't run gallons of water while waiting for it to warm up. If you use soap, your hands will be clean.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the fridge for drinking instead of running gallons of water down the drain while waiting for the water to get cold.
- When washing dishes in the sink, fill a bowl or the second sink

with hot water for rinsing, instead of running the tap constantly. Your dishes will be clean.

- Run your dishwasher only when it is full. Use the Light or Short cycle when possible.
- Don't use your in-sink Garbarator. Put compostable waste in your green bin or in the green alley bins.
- If you have a baby or small children, use a baby-size bath instead of filling a huge bath tub with water for one small child.
- Don't fill or refill your hot tub.
- Check your home for water leaks per the recommendations below, and install water saving hardware.

RESIDENTIAL WATER REDUCTION GOAL: 50% Conserving Water is Easier than you think!

Find and Fix Water Leaks

Leaks can easily account for 10% of water bill and waste both water and energy if the source is hot water faucet.

WATER METER - Do a quick test for overall leaks:

- Turn off all running water and water-using appliances, and do not flush the toilet.
- Record the number on the meter dial. After 20 minutes, re-check the meter. If no water has been turned on or used and the reading has changed, a leak is occurring. Test toilets and faucets as below. If no leaks can be found, a plumber should be called.

TOILET LEAKS – When a toilet leaks water escapes from the tank into the bowl. Toilets are notorious for hidden or silent leaks, because leaks are seldom noticed unless the toilet “Runs” after each flush (which can waste 4-5 gallons per minute).

- To determine if a toilet is leaking, look first at the toilet bowl after the tank has stopped filling. If water is still running into the bowl or if water can be heard running, the toilet is leaking.
- To test for a “Silent Leak”, put a few drops of food colouring or place a dye tablet in the tank after the tank has filled and the toilet has stopped running. Do not flush the toilet.

TOILET LEAKS

- Wait 10 minutes. If dye appears in the bowl, the toilet has a silent leak. This type of leak is usually caused by a defective flush valve (Flapper) ball or a corroded or scaled valve seat. Replacement balls and valves cost around \$3.00 and can be installed in 30 minutes.

FAUCET LEAKS – These leaks are obvious in faucets used regularly. Check your basement or outdoor faucets periodically for unnoticed leaks. Faucets usually leak because of a worn washer that can be replaced with a few hand tools for a few cents.

INSTALL A WATER-SAVING SHOWERHEAD

Standard showerheads use 5 to 10 gallons per minute. Installing a water-saving showerhead with a flow rate of three gallons or less per minute can save as much as 75 gallons of water during a normal 10-minute shower. Low-flow showerheads cost as little as \$3.00 each and can usually be installed in 10 minutes.

PLACE DISPLACEMENT DEVICES IN THE TOILET

Displacement devices raise the water level in the tank, but with less water. They should not be used in newer, low water-use toilets that use less than three gallons per flush. Bricks should not be used as small pieces may break off and permanently damage the plumbing system.

- Toilet Dams typically save two gallons per flush, and are available from plumbing supply stores for less than \$5.00 per pair.
- A Weighted Plastic Bottle filled with water and a few stones can accomplish the same result as dams. Make sure you place the bottle where it will not interfere with the flushing mechanism. You will save around one gallon of water per flush.
- If you are building a new home you might want to consider dual flush toilets. Or if you need to replace your old toilets.

INSTALL FAUCET AERATORS

Standard faucets flow at a rate of 5 gallons per minute. A low-flow aerator can reduce the flow to around two gallons per minute while still providing adequate water, saving up to 60 gallons per month for a typical family of four. Buy an aerator for less than \$1.00 at the hardware store.

CHANGE YOUR WATER USE HABITS

- Run the Washing Machine and Dishwasher only when fully loaded, saving around 60 gallons per week.
- Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth or shaving. For a family, this small act will save around 14 gallons of water per day.
- Use a pan when washing vegetables or rinsing dishes instead of running water constantly.
- Have one or two less showers per week.
- Fill your bath tub half full not full.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the fridge for drinking instead of running gallons of water down the drain waiting for the water to get cold.
- Wash your hands with the temperature of water that comes out of the tap.
- Run your dishwasher only when it is full. Use the light cycle when possible.
- Put compostable waste in your green bin instead of using your garbarator
- Do not fill and refill your bath tub.
- Check your home for any water leaks.

PLANT A DROUGHT-RESISTANT GARDEN

When planning to add new landscaping or to redesign exiting landscaping, the following suggestions will help save 50% or more of the water needed to maintain a traditional lawn and garden.

- Reduce grassed areas to the amount that will actually be used for recreation and entertainment. Front and side yards are logical areas that can be completely or partially converted from lawns to native grasses, ground cover and shrubs.
- Regular mowing of grass will improve the density and uniformity of all turf areas. During the growing season, mow once a week, leaving the grass clippings. During hot, dry weather, raise the height of your mower to two or three inches. Longer grass shades the root system and holds moisture.
- Use native grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees. Many local varieties are much more drought-resistant and are just as

beautiful as imported species. Once established, such plants require little maintenance and no supplemental water.

- Shape the soil around shrubs into earthen basins to hold and retain water close to the plant.
- Add organic matter, topsoil or soil conditioner to the soil to promote water penetration and retention.
- Remember that human needs take priority over plants. Plants and grasses can grow back.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT WATER USAGE

- Your water consumption is measured in cubic meters (m³). There are 1000 litres (220 gallons) in a cubic meter.
- The average person uses 326 litres of water per day; this amount increases to 440 litres per day during the summer months.
- Of this 326 litres, 30% is used for toilet flushing, 35% is used for showers/baths, 20% for laundry, 10% for cooking & drinking, and 5% is used for cleaning.
- The average toilet uses 20 litres per flush (low-flow toilets use an average of 10 litres per flush). The average number of flushes per day per person is four-and-a half.
- A 10 minutes shower uses an average of 100 litres.
- A bath uses an average of 60 litres.
- The average washing machine uses 225 litres per wash.
- The average dishwasher uses 40 litres per wash.
- Washing your car in the driveway with the hose running uses an average of 400 litres. Commercial car washes use an average of 800 litres per wash.
- The average garden hose has an output of 35 litres per minute. At the rate, running your sprinkler for ½ an hour uses 1050 litres of water.
- A leaking toilet can cost you up to an extra \$1000 per year. Often leaks can be fixed or avoided by replacing the flapper every few months – this simple solution may save you up to 20% of your annual water bill.
- On average, a low-flow showerhead or faucet will reduce your water usage by half.

RAIN BARRELS

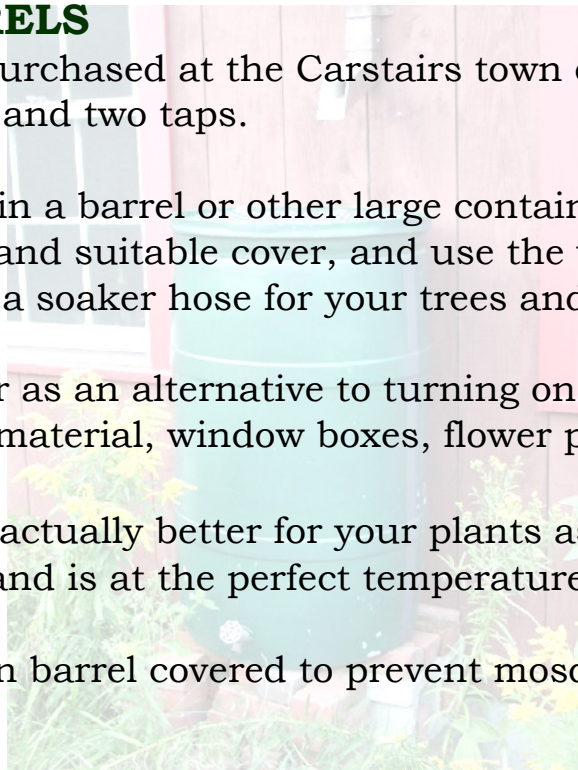
Can now be purchased at the Carstairs town office for \$55.00 includes GST and two taps.

Collect water in a barrel or other large container that is outfitted with a spigot and suitable cover, and use the water on your garden. Try attaching a soaker hose for your trees and flower beds.

Use this water as an alternative to turning on the hose for newly transplanted material, window boxes, flower pots and container gardens.

Rain water is actually better for your plants as it does not contain any chlorine and is at the perfect temperature.

Keep your rain barrel covered to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.



COMPOSTING

HOW IT WORKS

Composting is the decomposition of plant remains and other once living materials to make an earthy substance that is excellent for adding to household or gardens.

Biological agents like worms, insects, fungi bacterial and other micro-organisms chew up the materials which are further broken down by oxidation (exposure to air), reduction and hydrolysis (exposure to water).

HOW TO GET STARTED

Many people keep their kitchen wastes under the sink in a large plastic container with a re-sealable lid. When the container is full, empty it on to the compost pile.

In your yard find a suitable area to keep the materials until you can add them to the compost pile.

WHAT TO COMPOST

- Yard waste such as grass clippings
- Fallen leaves, weeds, tree fruit and berries
- Kitchen scraps such as fruit, vegetable peels and trimmings
- Eggs Shells (crushed)
- Tea bags and coffee grounds
- Paper filters

DO NOT COMPOST

- Meat
- Bones
- Grease
- Fat or fatty foods like cheese
- Salad dressings
- or left over oil
- They will attract pests or create an odor problem

Composters can be picked up at the Carstairs Town office at no charge!

Please contact the town office for further ideas for Recycling, Composting or Water Conservation at (403) 337-3341