

Are you up to the Dry Tropics Watersmart Outdoor Water use challenge? How many do you do?

1 Adjust watering schedule to match seasonal weather conditions and landscape requirements **2** Add organic matter to the soil (including top dressing the lawn) to improve moisture and nutrient holding capacity **3** Group plants with similar water needs together (Hydro-Zoning) **4** Ensure outdoor taps, hoses, and irrigation systems do not leak **5** Install and use targeted irrigation rather than handheld hoses or sprinkler systems **6** Lightly fertilise lawns to reduce watering need **7** Improve the water absorption of clay soils by treating with gypsum products **8** Take the catcher off the mower and leave the grass clippings on the lawn to protect against evaporation **9** Place mulch on garden beds and potted plants to reduce evaporation and increase organic matter in the soils **10** Plant vegetation suitable to the climatic conditions **11** Grow plants best suited to the soil **12** Reduce lawn area to reduce watering requirement **13** Install an onsite wastewater treatment and irrigation system **14** Water the garden in the early morning or in the evening to reduce evaporation **15** Add organic matter to the soil (including top dressing the lawn) to improve moisture and nutrient holding capacity **16** Install a greywater system on the property **17** Install and use a bore for outdoor purposes **18** Place pool cover over pool when not in use to reduce evaporation **19** Use a handheld hose to water the lawn rather than a sprinkler system **20** Use plants as screens and windbreaks to protect garden from hot winds and evaporation that dry out the soil **21** Do not water before rain events (check weather forecast before watering garden) **22** Improve the water absorption of clay soils by treating with gypsum products **23** Take the catcher off the mower and leave the grass clippings on the lawn to protect against evaporation **24** Install an automatic irrigation system with a rain switch or soil moisture sensor that shuts off when watering is not required **25** Place mulch on garden beds and potted plants to reduce evaporation and increase organic matter in the soils **26** Plant vegetation suitable to the climatic conditions **27** Grow plants best suited to the soil **28** Reduce lawn area to reduce watering requirement **29** Install a rainwater collection and storage system **30** Only backwash pool filter as frequently as required **31** Use soil wetters and water crystals to ensure garden soil absorbs as much water as possible **32** Add humectants to sandy soils to attract moisture from air spaces in the soil **33** Ensure taps are fully turned off **34** Install a windbreak to reduce pool water evaporation caused by the wind **35** Ensure taps are properly installed and maintained to reduce leakage **36** Avoid the purchase and use of recreational toys that require a steady stream of water **37** Adjust lawn mower height setting to highest appropriate setting to help retain lawn moisture **38** Adjust sprinklers so only the lawn/garden is watered and not the house, footpath or street **39** Set up a convenient rainwater irrigation system **40** Monitor and test soil moisture to determine if watering is required **41** Water the roots of plants rather than the leaves **42** Sweep driveways and pathways rather than hosing down **43** Landscape using swales to trap and direct rainwater and runoff **44** Install a tap timer for sprinkler and irrigation systems **45** Check for leaks around pool/spa pumps **46** Divert washing machine water to the garden **47** Identify and promptly fix pool leaks **48** Direct downspouts and other runoff towards vegetation and to pools **49** Minimise paving of solid outdoor areas as this increases heat radiation and evaporation **50** Regularly remove weeds from garden and lawn areas which compete with plants for water **51** Avoid planting young plants or new grass in winter when the ground is harder, as the high heat and disturbed soil will lose more water **52** Minimise the use of potted plants in preference for plants in the ground to reduce water requirements **53** Only water lawn when it is showing signs of stress, and water in long, slow soakings to promote deep root systems **54** Water plants less frequently, but more heavily, to promote root growth and drought tolerance **55** Use only the amount of water appropriate for the soil type **56** Wash car less often **57** Wash pets on the lawn **58** Use porous paving to increase water retention on the property **59** Design driveways and paved areas to slope towards the lawn or a garden bed if the soil is sandy to allow rainwater to water these areas **60** Wash the car and other vehicles on the lawn to reduce additional watering requirements **61** Use self-watering pots that trap excess water for later use **62** Ensure pool is not overfilled when refilling a pool or topping up **63** Use a pet wash service **64** Wash pets on the lawn **65** Use pots and containers that aren't porous to retain water in the pot **66** Reduce the amount of water splashed out of the pool when jumping/ playing about **67** Avoid installation of ornamental water features **68** Use a watering-can rather than let the hose run to water plants **69** Install and use garden hose trigger nozzles that shut off water when it is not being used, instead of letting a hose run **70** Utilise organic liquid fertilisers and/or compost rather than dry fertilisers, which take up water from the soil and raise salt levels **71** Use porous paving to increase water retention on the property