



# How to save water

by Lynette Louw

Water is very scarce in South Africa. Although everyone in the country has the right to have access to water, other factors such as drought and pollution make water even more scarce and unfit for use. Water has become very expensive, because we have so little of it and because it costs a lot of money to clean dirty water. Therefore we all have to act responsibly and help to keep water clean. One way of helping, is by saving water. We are all able to do this, on our farms and in our homes.

## Saving water in the home

- If you have running water in your bathroom, try to bath rather than shower. By showering, one uses up to 20 litres of water per minute.
- If you prefer to bath, then don't fill the bath completely. One bath can use between 80 and 150 litres of water.
- If the bath water is not too dirty, more than one person can use the same bath water.
- Once everyone has finished bathing, the water can be carried out in buckets to water the garden or wash the floors.

- If you have a toilet that flushes, do not flush it unnecessarily. Every time you flush the toilet, it uses 12 litres of water. You can fill a two-litre bottle with water and sand to make it heavy. Close the bottle and put it into the cistern of the toilet. Less water will then fill the cistern and you will use less when flushing.
- Always fix a leaking toilet. A single leaking toilet can waste almost 100 000 litres of water in a year – even if you think that it is only dripping.
- When you boil water, boil only as much as you need. Don't boil too much, because it will go to waste and it will use up more electricity or gas.
- Many people might not know this, but water is needed to generate electricity. If you do have electricity in your home, do not leave lights on if you are not using the room. A normal 100 Watt light bulb uses almost three litres of water to generate power for 12 hours.
- If you have boiled too much water, used too much in the bath or poured too much into a bucket, do not simply throw it out. Find other ways of using it, for example watering the vegetable garden.

### Using less water in the garden

- If you have a garden, vegetable patch or pasture, it is better to water it in the early morning or in the evening. That is when the sun is less harsh. If you water during the warmest hours (between ten in the morning and three in the afternoon) most of the water you give will evaporate.
- Do not plant plants that you do not know. Foreign plants often use up a lot of water. Many of our indigenous plants that belong in the region, use much less water.
- If your roof has a gutter pipe, put a bucket at its end so that you can catch up all the water running down from the roof after the morning dew or even rain. This water can be used for watering the garden or for your cows' drinking troughs. Do not use it in the home for drinking or cooking.
- Use leftover water after washing clothes or after bathing, to water the garden.
- Try to water your garden with buckets. A garden hose can use up to 30 litres of water per minute. With a bucket you can control the amount of water that you use, and you can decide what parts need more water than others.

### Important things to remember

- ! Always drink only clean water.
- ! If your water comes from a source such as a borehole, it is important that you first filter the water by squeezing it through a clean cloth into a container. Add one teaspoon of household bleach to every 20 litres of filtered water. Let it stand for at least 30 minutes before drinking it.
- ! You can also boil water to make it safe for drinking.
- ! Boiled or cleaned water can become dirty again if left open. So cover your drinking water with a cloth or towel when you are not using it.
- ! Remember that your livestock also need clean drinking water. Do not give them bath or wash water to drink, as this might make them ill.

(Source: [www.dwaf.gov.za](http://www.dwaf.gov.za)) UM