Test your home's plumbing system for "water-robbing leaks"

During times of potential drought, it's important that we all do our part to conserve water. Not only is it the right thing to do for your community and the environment, it has the added benefit of saving you, the homeowner, money. The first and maybe the most important thing you can do is check your home's plumbing system for leaking components that waste water and needlessly cost you money.

The vast majority of water leakage in a family home can be traced to two common component failures; leaky faucets and leaky toilets. According to data compiled by the RI Water Works Assoc., silent toilet leaks can waste from 30 to 500 gallons per day per toilet. Leaky faucets or showerheads can waste from 7 to 20 gallons per day per fixture. That's water, and money, literally going down the drain. Repairs to these problems are generally inexpensive and simple. The first step is to do this simple test to see if your home's plumbing is wasting water and costing you money.

Before you go to bed at night, check your home to be certain that all water taps, inside and out (including automatic sprinklers), are turned off. Then record the reading on your water meter. In the morning, before anyone uses any water, check your meter reading again. If the reading has changed, you may have a leak. Chances are the problem stems from one or more malfunctioning toilets. To narrow this down apply this simple test. Add some food coloring to the water in your toilet tanks; if color shows up in any of the toilet bowls after 15 minutes or so, you've identified the culprit. Usually a simple flapper replacement will solve your problem. The replacement of faucet washers, O-rings, or cartridges on troublesome fixtures will generally solve these types of leaks. After fixing any identified problems, run the test again. No change in your meter reading will allow you to sleep peacefully knowing leaks aren't "robbing" you of water and money each night**.**