

the
avenue

BUILDING
YOUR
Sustainable
HOME



PEET



Native plants provide for native wildlife.

Sustainable Water Use

Saving water at home is one of the simplest things you can do to help the environment and it can also save you money. As water is one of the most precious resources on the planet and only comes in a finite supply, conservation of this resource is paramount to living more sustainably. These guidelines will provide you with a few easy steps to help save water in the garden and in your home.



IN THE GARDEN

Water wise gardening

Gardens can require a lot of water with many non-native species, like roses, demanding constant watering and maintenance. A water wise garden will help you save water but also reduce the need to maintain your garden, provide habitat for local biodiversity and minimise the use of harmful chemicals.

Designing your garden

Many water wise principles can be incorporated into your garden when you first design it. This will save a lot of time and money when it comes to maintaining your garden, but most importantly save you a lot of water.

1. Avoid large areas of turf:

In Perth's dry climate, turf needs a large amount of water to survive. Minimise the amount of turf and use a water wise turf species (such as Buffalo, Couch or Kikuyau). Also plant areas of turf in combination with water wise vegetation. This will minimise maintenance of your garden and minimise the amount of water your garden will require.

2. Install a drip irrigation system:

Drip Irrigation slowly releases water below the soil surface, minimising the loss of water through evaporation.

3. Prepare your soil: Healthy soil is important for plant and seedling survival, providing the necessary nutrients to help plants grow but also helps to retain water. To improve the quality of your soil, you can dig in organic fertiliser, animal manure and compost.

4. Microclimates: Take note of the microclimate of your garden. For example, if your garden is exposed to sunlight and experiences dry easterly winds, you will need to choose more drought tolerant plants. If you get a lot of shade and a cool breeze from the ocean, you will be able to plant species that are less drought tolerant.

5. Plant locally native plants:

Locally native plants will be best adapted to the climate of The Avenue and will require very little water to survive. The Water Corporation has a useful list of Waterwise Plants for the Perth region (www.watercorporation.com.au) and many local nurseries also stock native plants (<http://perthnurseries.com/>).

6. Hydrozone: Group plants with similar watering requirements together when you organise where your plants are going to go in the garden. That way the right amount of water can be applied, minimising water wastage.

7. Timing: The best time to plant is in the wetter months of the year (June-August). The winter rainfall can help provide the water necessary for young plants, as well as reduce your water demand.

8. Install a rain sensor override switch: A rain sensor override switch will ensure water is not wasted from your irrigation system on rainy days.



Spray irrigation evaporates quickly.



Drip irrigation can be directed onto the root zones of plants.



Use waterwise plants that do not require large amounts of water.



Apply mulch to garden beds to reduce evaporation from soil and minimise expanses of lawn.

Maintaining your garden

Once your garden is established, there are a few simple actions you can do to keep your water usage and garden maintenance low.

1. Mulch: Mulch provides a great microclimate for plants, keeping the soil cool and ensures that water does not evaporate too quickly. Mulch also reduces the likelihood of weeds growing. When looking for garden mulch, aim for organic mulch with a pH range from 7.0-7.3 which still allows the soil to breathe. It is important that your mulch provider can guarantee that the mulch is free of weeds, disease and pathogens.

2. Keeping your soil healthy:

Maintain the quality of your soils by digging in compost, animal manure and fertiliser regularly. A worm farm is a great way to create good quality soil and can be fun to look after. A compost bin can also provide lots of nutrients for your soil and reduce your household waste. More information is available from the Switch Your Thinking website (www.switchyourthinking.com).

3. Fertilise: Fertiliser helps with seedling survival and should be used regularly. Fertiliser can also impact on water quality so it is best to use an organic fertiliser and minimise nutrient runoff. Try to prevent fertiliser spreading into any area, like your driveway or pathways, where it can be washed into drains or waterways. Avoid using fertiliser before heavy rainfall to prevent nutrient runoff or leaching of nutrients into the groundwater. More information on safe fertiliser use can be found on the Smart Approved WaterMark website (www.smartwatermark.org/products/waterwise) or the Department of Agriculture and Food website (www.agric.wa.gov.au).

4. Strategic watering: If you don't have an irrigation system and your garden requires a bit of extra watering over summer, the best time to water is at dawn and dusk to avoid any further evaporation. The Water Corporation has set watering days across Perth, which determine when people are allowed to water their gardens. This relates to your household address and postcode and can be found at the following website: <https://www.watercorporation.com.au/Waterwise>

5. Weed regularly: Weeds can multiply quickly so it's important to remove them regularly. Dispose of weeds carefully after removal. It is a good idea to check with your local council (www.armadale.wa.gov.au) about what garden waste disposal facilities are available in your area.

6. Fix dripping taps: By fixing dripping taps quickly you can save further water wastage. The Water Corporation provide an online resource for being waterwise around the home which includes advice, offers, waterwise specialists, products and programs. These are available online at <https://www.watercorporation.com.au/Waterwise>.

7. Prevent mosquitoes around your home: Mosquitoes can breed in any type of standing water, from natural and man-made water bodies to water-holding containers. Backyards are a common mosquito breeding environment, with pot plant drip trays, rain-water tanks, blocked roof gutters, domestic ponds, and paddling pools. To learn more about how to prevent mosquitoes around your home visit <https://www.armadale.wa.gov.au/mosquitoes-and-other-pests>

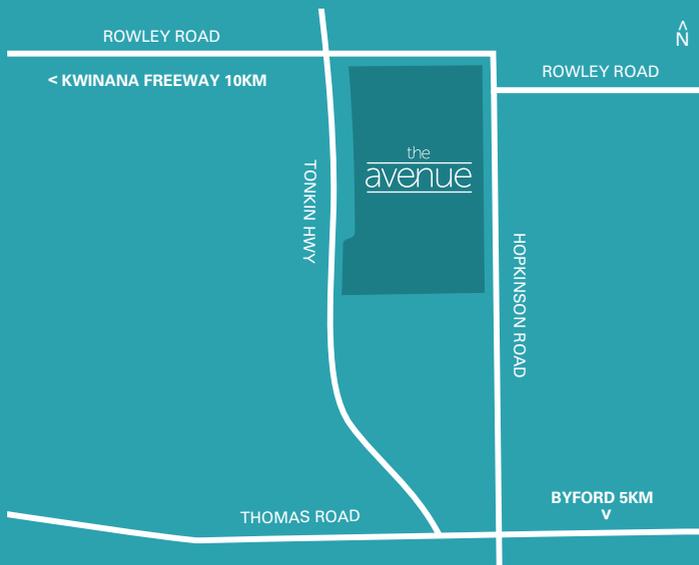
Example of a rainwater tank that you could have in your home.



RAINWATER TANK

Rainwater is a free resource that you can harness in your own home by installing a rainwater tank. In Perth, the average home can collect up to 50,000 litres (L) of water a year. This could be used to water your garden, to wash the car or can even be plumbed into your house to flush your toilet or wash your clothes. Before you install your new rainwater tank, make sure you include the following requirements as you design your home and garden:

- It is recommended that a tank holds a minimum of 4 weeks supply of water, which is recommended by Smart Approved WaterMark.
- Allocate a flat area around the house for your rainwater tank that is near the garden or appliances you want it to service. You should install your tank close to your house, near existing downpipes.
- If your tank is going to help water your garden, it is best to place the tank at a higher elevation than the garden so that a pump will not be required.
- If your tank is going to service an appliance inside your home, you will need to install a pump. This will require a waterproof outdoor power point for the tank, a copper cold water line that connects to the outside wall of your home just above your tank, a down pipe/s within two metres of the tank plus connection to the mains water as backup.
- Allow for the cost of delivery, installation, labour and any required modifications. Some waterwise offers may apply so make sure you check out the Water Corporation website at <https://www.watercorporation.com.au/Help-and-advice/Waterwise/Outdoor/A-quick-guide-to-rainwater-tanks>.



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