

Greywater: The Future of Water Preservation

WATER Down the drain and out of mind? Here's how individuals and businesses can preserve our most precious resource and move towards a more sustainable future.



While clean, safe water is a necessity for safe drinking, food preparation and sanitation, experts estimate that roughly one billion people around the world don't have reliable access to it. For many Americans, and others in developed countries who don't have to worry about clean water, it can be easy to take it for granted — and waste it as a result.

But being conscious of water use is important to everyone. A growing demand for water has made it one of the most at-risk resources on our planet, yet it remains one of the most important resources to a more sustainable future. By paying attention to more efficient water use, consumers, business owners and municipalities can help reduce waste and conserve this precious resource.

The used water solution

One opportunity to preserve the water we do have lies in recycling and reusing water that we've already used. Known as greywater, this includes water used for laundry, showers, washing dishes and other sink activities.

Greywater can be treated several ways. Diversion devices carry greywater from original sources such as sinks and washing machines and transfer it to its reused purpose, including irrigation hoses or toilets, where drinking water is not necessary.

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Greywater treatment systems help optimize water use by treating it to varying degrees of usability. Water is collected, filtered and treated using either chemicals or natural microorganisms, and then returned to the system to be used for various purposes, depending on its level of treatment.



There are many ways the proper treatment and reuse of greywater can help alleviate the demands on our existing water supply. In addition to generating water for toilet flushing and laundry, it can be used for the irrigation of plants — from parks, sports fields and golf courses to agricultural fields. Not only does this process reduce the need for fresh water, it also cuts down on the amount of wastewater in our sewer systems, both of which are sustainable benefits.

Sustainable is smart business

With Americans using an estimated 127 percent more water today than we did in 1950, businesses and municipalities are in a good position to demonstrate the importance of optimizing water use. As water treatment technologies advance, such initiatives are not only good for the environment — they're also good for the bottom line.

Saving water lowers operating costs not only in the form of a lower water bill; it can also save energy and guarantee a constant source of water in case of drought. A less tangible, but still valuable, benefit is the public relations value of being known as an organization that's making an effort to protect the environment.

As consumer demand for sustainable water reuse solutions continues to grow, a variety of greywater treatment technologies and products are available to meet different operations' varying needs. Making better use of our water resources via this technology is a promising way to improve business operations while moving toward a more sustainable future.