

A Quick Start for the Water-Wise

Changing our behavior is tough. Start slowly; begin by incorporating three new actions into your daily life. Don't expect miracles overnight, but do expect miraculous change over time.



Choose one action that relates to conservation of water or reduction of waste.

Preventing pollution by conserving water and reducing waste is far cheaper than cleaning up pollutants afterwards. See Chapters 2 and 3 for more ideas.



Choose one action that relates to household hazardous waste.

Many of the products we use around the home find their way into our waters. So use the safest alternatives, suggested in Chapter 5.



Add new actions as your first choices become part of your daily life.

If you like to garden, choose an action from Chapters 7 and 8 on soil erosion and landscaping. If you're a boater, choose an action from Chapter 10, on good boating practices.

Ten Simple Things you Can Do Right Now to Begin Caring for our Local Waters.

1.

Saving water is as important as keeping it clean. Chapters 3 and 4 offer many ideas about how to avoid wasting water.

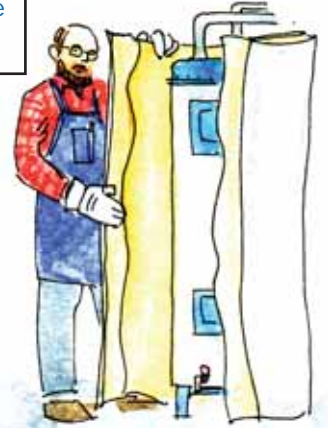
Conserving water at home and in the office can reduce the volume treated by your septic system or sewage treatment plant



2.

For a free energy audit and financial assistance information, contact the Cape Light Compact.

Insulate your hot water heater, caulk or replace leaky windows, upgrade to Energy Star rated appliances, and insulate your home to reduce its energy demands.



3.

For information about hazardous waste see Chapter 5. Call the Barnstable County Department of Health and the Environment or the Cape Cod Commission for collection days schedule.

Dispose of your hazardous wastes during special collection days rather than in your regular garbage pickup or down storm drains.



4.

Motor vehicles are the biggest contributor to air pollution and one of the biggest to water pollution. Plan ahead to do several errands in one trip. Car-pool or use public transportation whenever possible. Encourage our local transit authority to meet your needs.

Use your car less!



5.

Recycle used motor oil.

One gallon of oil can foul one million gallons of freshwater. That's a year's water supply for 30 people! There are only two ways to safely dispose of waste oil: return it to the place you bought it (along with the receipt), or bring it to the hazardous waste collection site at the transfer station.



6.

Pre-cycle by considering product packaging when purchasing.

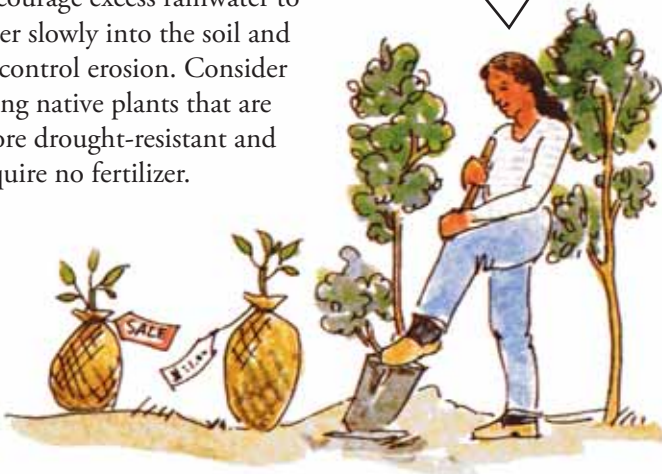
Packaging makes up 33% of our household waste, and all of it must be shipped off-Cape for disposal. Look for products with limited, recycled, or reusable packaging. Buy foods in glass and aluminum containers. See Chapter 6 on recycling for more hints.



7.

Plant new trees and shrubs to encourage excess rainwater to filter slowly into the soil and to control erosion. Consider using native plants that are more drought-resistant and require no fertilizer.

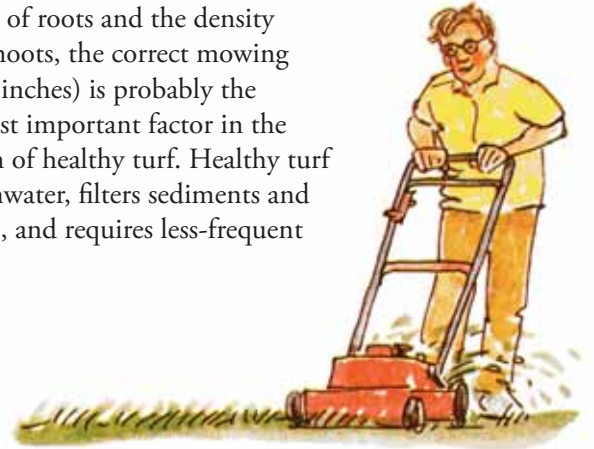
Preserve the established trees around your home and in your neighborhood.



8.

Because mowing height determines the depth of roots and the density of grass shoots, the correct mowing height (3 inches) is probably the single most important factor in the formation of healthy turf. Healthy turf holds rainwater, filters sediments and chemicals, and requires less-frequent watering.

Reduce runoff from lawns by properly adjusting your lawn mower, and herbicides.



Eliminate your use of lawn fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides.

9.

You can have a healthy lawn and a beautiful garden without using toxic chemicals. Refer to Chapter 8 on landscaping and Chapter 9 on lawn care for sound gardening and pest control tips.



10.

If your boat is stained, use phosphate-free soap or any of the alternatives listed in Chapter 5 on Hazardous Waste. See Chapter 10 on boating for more hints.

Rinse and scrub your boat hull and decks with a brush instead of using soap. You will be helping to keep our waters clean.

