



Collecting greywater can be as simple as using a bucket to catch cold or used water from the shower or washing machine.

How to reuse greywater

Greywater is household wastewater from the bath, shower, wash basins and washing machine/laundry. Greywater is now seen as a valuable water resource that can be reused for watering the garden. Greywater does not include water from the swimming pool or toilet, as this water can pose health and environmental risks. Kitchen wastewater is typically excluded from greywater reuse due to the high levels of fats, greases and detergents.

On average each person in Australia produces about 100 litres of greywater per day, which translates to around 150,000 litres per year for a family of four. Instead of being wasted, this greywater can be

diverted to your favourite plants to help them thrive during dry times. As greywater can contain pathogens (disease causing organisms), it is important to follow some simple practices to eliminate any health risks. With this in mind you can safely water your garden independently of current restrictions whilst still playing an important role in conserving our precious water resources.

Install an approved greywater system and save each year:



TANYA HA, an expert in environmental living and the author of *Greeniology* and *The Australian Green Consumer Guide* provides advice on water saving in your home



JOSH BYRNE sustainable gardening specialist and popular media personality provides advice on reusing greywater.



Government of **Western Australia**
Department for **Planning and Infrastructure**



WHAT CAN I DO?

Reuse greywater on your garden by either using a bucket (the simplest option) or installing a WA Department of Health (DoH) approved greywater reuse system.

HOW DO I DO IT?

The simplest option is to collect greywater from the bathroom and laundry with a bucket and apply it directly to your garden beds or lawn as a substitute for mains water. You don't need to install any special equipment to do this, but the following guidelines should be followed:

- Apply greywater in several locations to prevent pooling. This reduces the likelihood of contact and odours, as well as the build up of salts from detergents which can damage soil.
- Only apply greywater to areas that are inaccessible to children and pets.
- Don't use greywater from the washing of nappies or soiled clothing.
- Don't use greywater when a household resident has an infectious disease.

- Don't put greywater on edible plants such as leafy greens or root crops. Fruit trees are OK provided there is no direct contact between the greywater and the fruit.
- Don't store greywater for longer than 24 hours as it may turn septic.
- Use detergents and cleaning products that are labelled as being suitable for the garden to prevent damage to soil, plants and groundwater.

The other option is to install a WA DoH approved greywater reuse system. These range from simple direct diversion models that provide basic filtration prior to irrigation, through to more elaborate systems that treat and disinfect the greywater. For a list of greywater reuse systems that are currently approved for use in WA visit www.health.wa.gov.au/home.



Greywater reuse systems must apply the greywater beneath the ground via a sub-soil trench or purple colour coded drippers covered with 100mm of mulch (unless the greywater is treated and disinfected). This reduces the scope for human contact and minimises the potential health risks associated with greywater systems. Given that it's important for these risks to be properly managed, the installation of most approved systems must be done by a licensed plumber with the approval of your Local Government Authority.

How much does it cost?

Greywater systems vary greatly in cost depending on the type of system you install. A simple DoH approved gravity fed direct diversion system will cost around \$800, mid-range pumped systems range from \$2,000-\$5,000, and a top-end treatment system (which allows the greywater to be safely stored in tanks for an extended period of time as well as used for above ground irrigation) can cost in excess of \$10,000. Remember that a bucket costs around \$2, so there is an option for every budget!

A federal rebate of up to \$500* is available for the purchase and installation of a permanent greywater treatment system for domestic use as part of the National Rainwater and Greywater Initiative.

One rebate per household for either the rainwater tank or greywater system and it can be claimed on investment properties as long as it is a principal place of residence (i.e. tenanted as a residence, not a holiday home or similar). System must be installed by a licensed plumber.

The guidelines and application form for the National Rainwater and Greywater Initiative household rebates are available from www.environment.gov.au/water or by calling 1800 808 571.

For more detailed guidelines on using greywater reuse systems, please call the Department of Health on (08) 9222 4222 or go to www.health.wa.gov.au/home/ for more information.

*NRGI rebate correct at June 2009. They are subject to change.



WHY?

Water used in the garden accounts for around half of Western Australia's domestic water consumption. Using greywater can, dramatically reduce the amount of scheme water you use in your home, saving you both water and money.

WHEN LOOKING FOR A PLUMBER TO INSTALL A GREYWATER SYSTEM, BE SURE TO CHOOSE AN ENDORSED WATERWISE PLUMBER.

This means they have been trained in Waterwise products and methods with the Master Plumbers Association Environment™ course, endorsed by the Water Corporation.

Go to www.watercorporation.com.au under "Being Waterwise" > "Waterwise specialist" for a list of Waterwise plumbers.