



## 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. A greywater reuse system can provide at least 40,000 litres per year of greywater to the garden from 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.

### 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](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/home).

Greywater reuse systems must apply the greywater beneath the ground via a subsoil 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 topend 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!

For more detailed guidelines on using greywater reuse systems, please consult the Department of Health on [www.health.wa.gov.au/home](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/home)

