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VIEW

MAKE WATER WORK

Water conservation program takes aim at lawns and gardens

"Make Water Work" encourages use of drought tolerant plants, reduced water waste

RICHARD MCGUIRE
ABERDEEN PUBLISHING

With lower water levels in the Okanagan this year, the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) has kicked off its annual outdoor water conservation campaign earlier than usual.

This year's Okanagan WaterWise program with the slogan "Make Water Work" takes aim at water waste in residential homes and gardens.

The valley has less water available per person than anywhere else in Canada, but it has some of the highest use in the country, the OBWB says in a news release.

Household lawns and gardens account for 24 per cent of all water used in the Okanagan and a lot of it is wasted.

This year's campaign aims to promote a collection of plants that require less water and grow well in the drier Okanagan climate. The collection is sold through participating garden centre sponsors.

Mayors from around



the Okanagan took a pledge to conserve water and they are challenging residents of their communities to do the same at www.MakeWaterWork.ca.

"The mayors are competing with each other to see how many residents per capita are signing the pledge," said Anna Warwick Sears, executive director of the OBWB.

By making the competition on a per-capita basis, smaller communities have a chance to compete with larger cities, she said.

"It's a friendly competition and it gets the elected officials excited and involved," she said, noting that one Kelowna councillor got so excited by what she heard at the launch that she left with a big cart full of drought-tolerant plants.

Warwick Sears said one

of the worst ways people waste water is by overwatering or giving plants far more water than they actually need.

Another problem is that when grass is put down, it is often put on subsurface soil without a layer of topsoil.

Studies show that when topsoil with compost is added, the lawn needs far less water because the soil holds the water better.

"A lot of the new developments go in and they strip off all the topsoil and then they roll down the lawn," she said. "You create this terrible condition where to keep the grass green, you have to water it every day."

Watering during the daytime for residential landscaping is also wasteful because the water evaporates at a faster

rate, she said.

People also need to make sure their irrigation systems are working properly so the water isn't going onto pavement or into the gutter.

The advantage to the Make Water Work plant collection is that people can have beautiful plants in their gardens that can be a permanent fixture and they don't have to worry about pulling things out if there are water restrictions or stressing plants if they can't water often, Warwick Sears said.

"You could have a permanent, beautiful garden and it's a garden that's appropriate for our climate," she said. "Our climate is quite water stressed. Why would you want to live in Canada's only desert and grow plants that need a lot of water?" Some of the plants on the Make Water Work list provide three seasons of colour interest.

These include cushion spurge, thrift, catnip, lavender, Missouri evening primrose, tail sedum, coreopsis and blanket

flower.

Others are low maintenance and are ultra-low in water use. These include blue fescue, silver mound, sedum, hens and chicks, Russian sage, thyme and yucca.

The "Make Water Work Plant Collection" was developed by the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise, the Okanagan Xeriscape Association (OXA) and Bylands Nursery.

There are seven garden centres from Armstrong to Osoyoos participating in the program.

Surinder Sandhu of Sandhu Greenhouses said she and her husband Jeweuan Sandhu sell all the plants in the collection. In fact, they were already selling them before the collection was announced.

Additionally, they also sell a wide range of cacti, which although not part of the collection, are also very drought tolerant.

Surinder Sandhu said her business has long encouraged people to grow these plants if they are looking for drought tolerant plants to grow.

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the main components to shedding pounds and maintaining that weight loss over the long haul. Although bodies and dietary needs vary from person to person, medical professionals typically advise adults to consume a certain amount of calories per day to maintain long-term health.

The average adult male needs approximately 2,500 calories per day to keep his weight constant, while the average adult female needs 2,000. Reducing caloric intake slightly can serve as a catalyst to losing weight. A healthy weight can reduce the risk of certain diseases and conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease and arthritis-related joint pain.

Men and women will find there are

dozens of diets designed to help people eat less, and some of these may be more manageable than others. There also are additional strategies people can take to curb unhealthy eating habits, which can contribute to weight gain.

• **Drink more water.** Dehydration symptoms can mimic the symptoms of hunger. Before reaching for a snack, try a tall glass of water. Also, consume water before a meal and you will be less likely to overeat.

• **Use a smaller plate.** It's possible to trick the brain into thinking you're eating more than you really are by reducing the size of your plate. A full plate sends the signal that you're eating a lot.

• **Eat slowly.** Rushing through a meal may cause you to

overeat. Focus on the bites you take and savor each one. Slowing down also will help you recognize when you are satisfied and can put down your fork.

• **Dole out portions in advance.** When eating meals or snacking, pre-select portion sizes and keep the larger pot of food or bag of chips in the pantry. Out of sight, out of mind, and you probably won't miss the extra food.

• **Start with a protein-fueled breakfast.** Breakfast is touted as the most important meal of the day, and there is evidence that selecting protein laden foods for breakfast, rather than simple carbohydrates, may suppress appetite throughout the day. Choosing an omelet over a bagel might make a real differ-

ence.

• **Don't eat while distracted.** Eating while involved in an important conversation or while watching an engaging television program can divert attention away from how much you are eating, so stay focused on the amount of food you're eating.

• **Know food weaknesses.** If you're a sucker for ice cream, don't stock it in the freezer. If you tend to eat as a coping method to stress, look for a healthier way to relieve that anxiety, such as exercise. Recognizing and eliminating foods that may encourage poor eating habits can help you eat less.

Overeating can be curbed by taking a few simple steps that are as effective as they are easy.