

# Sustainability Week at Walsall College

Water



**Sustainability  
Week**



Walsall College

As everyone who lives here knows, most of the UK has a fairly rainy climate. It might seem surprising that even here, water shortages can be a problem, and in the future with a growing population and uncertainty about the climate there is likely to be a greater need to use water carefully.

Climate change means that the UK could experience severe droughts in some years, and widespread flash flooding at other times. The floods of 2007 cost insurers £3 billion pounds.

The average person in the UK directly uses 150 litres of water every day and with a population of more than 61 million people, that adds up to a lot of water. Some types of business and industry also require lots of water.

Part of the reason for water shortages in the UK is that despite the amount of rainfall here there are limited facilities for storing collected rainwater, and most of it goes into drains or into the ground.

The roof of a typical four bedroom house could collect 100,000 litres of rainwater in a year – enough to fill a small swimming pool.

To avoid the risk of illness collected rainwater must be filtered properly before it can be used for drinking or bathing, but it is fine for washing cars, watering the garden or flushing toilets.

The water from baths, sinks, showers and washing machines is known as 'greywater' – like rainwater, it isn't suitable for drinking without filtration but can be used in the same way as rainwater and offers a way to reduce the consumption of clean piped water.

Saving water is good for the environment, and saves money on water bills.

## Did you know?

The desert states of Syria and Sudan have more water available per person than the South East of England, and London is drier than Istanbul. (Environment Agency)

Water use costs businesses in England and Wales around £30 million every day.

One drop a second from a dripping tap wastes nearly 5,000 litres of water in a year.

The human body is made up of 70% water; for newborn babies it is 80%.

A modern dishwasher, with a full load, uses less water than handwashing them in the sink.

Roughly three quarters of the earth's surface is covered by water but less than one percent of it is fresh water suitable for human use. 90% of the fresh water on Earth is in Antarctica.

The United Nations predict that in this century there will be wars fought over the control of water supplies in regions where water is scarce.

Toilet flushing accounts for almost a third of household water use.

Including the water used to produce the food we eat and the other goods and services we use, the average person in Britain uses 3400 litres of water a day.

## What can you do?

- If you have an outside space with a drainpipe from the roof install a water butt to collect rainwater for watering the garden and washing the car.
- Install a 'Save a Flush' cistern displacement device in your toilet – this reduces the water used for flushing by up to 3 litres per flush.
- Fix dripping taps and make sure they are turned off properly
- Don't leave the tap running while you clean your teeth – a running tap wastes six litres of water every minute.
- Take a short shower instead of a bath and save 1600 litres of water each month.

# Water Quiz

1) True or false: London is drier than Istanbul

- a) True
- b) False

2) True or false: Washing dishes by hand uses less water than using a dishwasher?

- a) True
- b) False

3) How much of an adult's body is made up of water?

- a) 20 percent
- b) 55 percent
- c) 70 percent

4) How much water does the average person in the UK use directly every day?

- a) 94 litres
- b) 150 litres
- c) 300 litres

5) Over 90% of the world's supply of freshwater is found where?

- a) Antarctica
- b) Asia
- c) North America

6) How much was the insurance bill for the UK floods of summer 2007?

- a) £1 billion
- b) £2 billion
- c) £3 billion

## Competition

Join in our competition to win £40 worth of vouchers. All you have to do is e-mail the four sustainability resource packs available on GOAL and like the Walsall College Sustainability Week Facebook Page to a minimum of three people and cc sustainabilityweek@walsallcollege.ac.uk that you know that are not studying at Walsall College and you will automatically be entered.