The Season for Saving Water

During the holidays, water plays a role in everything from food preparation to the cleanup process. With all the cooking, cleaning, travel, and festive preparations, water usage can skyrocket. Here’s how to incorporate water conservation into your holidays while still enjoying the spirit of the season:

* Defrost frozen foods in the refrigerator or the microwave instead of running hot water over them.
* Rinse vegetables and fruits in a sink or pan filled with water instead of under running water. This water can then be reused to water houseplants. A running faucet can use up to 4 gallons per minute.
* When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water and fill the rinsing sink one-third to one-half full. Avoid letting the water run continuously in the rinsing sink.
* If you have a dishwasher, use it instead of hand washing. Dishwashers typically use less water than hand washing, especially if you’re using older plumbing fixtures.
* Select the proper size pans for cooking. Large pans require more cooking water than may be necessary.
* Scrape food scraps into the garbage can or a composting bin, rather than rinsing them into the sink’s garbage disposal. A garbage disposal uses up to 4.5 gallons of water per minute.
* Run your dishwasher only when you have a full load. Dishwashers use between 7 and 12 gallons per load.
* If you’re hosting your family or staying with relatives during the holidays, encourage everyone to take shorter showers. If you have kids, consider filling up a bath rather than running the water for individual showers, as it can save water in the long run.
* Traveling often means extra laundry, from clothes to towels and linens. Be sure to run full loads in the washing machine and set the water level to match the size of the load. Opt for cold water washes when possible, to save on both water and energy.
* Choose an artificial Christmas tree since they do not require water. They are not a fire hazard and preserve our tree canopies.

Don’t let the busy holiday season keep you from practicing good water conservation habits. Water conservation doesn't have to take a backseat to the festivities. By implementing simple changes, such as optimizing your cooking, using water-efficient devices, and adjusting your holiday routines, you can enjoy a more sustainable and mindful season. This holiday, let's give the gift of conservation, helping ensure that water remains a resource we can continue to enjoy for generations to come.