

THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE: WORLD WATER DAY – MARCH 22

by Mariana Nicholae
GROW Ecological Commissioner

Water conservation isn't just a local issue; it's a global imperative. World Water Day, celebrated annually on **March 22**, shines a spotlight on the importance of freshwater and advocates for the sustainable management of water resources. Established by the United

Nations in 1993, the day inspires action to address water scarcity, pollution, and inequity.

This year theme of World Water Day is **Save our Glaciers**. Inevitably, the climate change affects drastically the glaciers, melting them down and pushing moreover for climate disturbances.

In 2025, nearly 1.8 billion people will live in areas plagued by water scarcity, according to the World Health Organization. By participating in World Water Day, communities can amplify their efforts, learn from global innovations, and inspire others to take action.

Saving Every Drop

Water is one of Earth's most precious resources. With increasing populations, climate change, and overuse threatening global water supplies, it's imperative for communities to adopt smarter water use practices. Small changes at the local level can make a huge difference in conserving water, ensuring its availability for generations to come. By utilizing rainwater, embracing greywater systems, and rethinking how we garden, communities can lead the charge in sustainable water use.

Harvesting Rainwater: Nature's Gift

Rainwater harvesting is a simple yet impactful practice that allows households and communities to collect and store rain for future use. By installing rain barrels or larger cistern systems, rainwater can be captured from roofs and used for irrigation, flushing toilets, or even cleaning outdoor spaces. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, rainwater harvesting can reduce household water use by up to 30%. Moreover, it helps reduce urban runoff, which often carries pollutants into nearby rivers and lakes.

Consider installing a rainwater harvesting system at home or in community spaces like parks or schools. This not only reduces the demand for municipal water but also builds resilience during droughts. Our Village Hall encouraged this practice through distribution of free rain barrels.

Smart Gardening: Plant with Purpose

Gardens can be both beautiful and water-efficient.

Mulching is an effective strategy. By covering the soil with organic material, you help retain moisture, reduce evaporation, and suppress weeds. Drip irrigation systems can also deliver water directly to a plant's roots, minimizing waste.

Greywater: A Hidden Resource

Greywater—wastewater from sinks, showers, and laundry—can be safely reused for irrigation and landscaping when treated or managed properly. By installing a greywater recycling system, households can save significant amounts of water. According to the

Alliance for Water Efficiency, greywater reuse can reduce household water consumption by 20% to 40%.

However, it's crucial to ensure proper filtration and compliance with local regulations before using greywater. Partnering with experts or community organizations can help make these systems accessible and effective.

Bottom line, small, intentional actions can ripple outwards, creating significant impact. By harvesting rainwater, gardening sustainably, reusing greywater, and educating ourselves on the global water crisis, we can contribute to a water-wise future. While individual steps are vital, community collaboration multiplies their effectiveness. Let's take this opportunity to lead by example, because every drop counts.

Checklist: Your Next Steps Toward Water Conservation

1. Install a Rain Barrel
 - Research local incentives or rebates for rainwater harvesting systems.
 - Position barrels under gutters to capture roof runoff.
2. Transform Your Garden
 - Choose native or drought-tolerant plants.
 - Install a drip irrigation system.
 - Use mulch to retain soil moisture.
3. Explore Greywater Systems
 - Learn about local regulations for greywater use.
 - Consult experts to design and install a greywater recycling system.
4. Celebrate World Water Day (March 22)
 - Share water conservation tips on your social media.
5. Reduce Water Waste



- Fix leaks promptly.
- Use water-efficient appliances and fixtures.
- Turn off taps while brushing your teeth or washing dishes.
- 6. Educate and Advocate
 - Share what you've learned with friends and neighbors.
 - Support policies that promote sustainable water management.

By adopting these practices, we can secure a brighter future where clean, abundant water is accessible for all. Remember, every step—no matter how small—brings us closer to a more sustainable world.

Green Fact of the Month

"Each American uses on average 82 gallons of water a day

at home." www.epa.gov from 2015. For Example, the current federal water-efficiency standard from 1994 for showerheads is 2.5 gallons of water/min. Actions: Read GROW's article on

World Water Day.

Recipe of the Month

The kitchen is a great place to think about reducing water use. When it comes to cooking, consider steaming or roasting vegetables instead of boiling, reducing meat and dairy consumption (they are water intensive to produce), and making one pot meals to decrease on dishes. This month's recipe is easy to customize with your favorite vegetables or potatoes and comes together quickly. Enjoy!

Vegetable and Chickpea Sheet Pan Dinner

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups broccolini chopped
- ½ cup red onion chopped
- 1 cup bell pepper de-seeded chopped

- 1 cup carrots peeled and chopped
- 1 cup zucchini chopped
- 2 cups sweet potatoes diced
- 1 can chickpeas drained and rinsed
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- 2 tbsp tamari
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp paprika

Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F and line a large baking tray with parchment paper. Alternatively, you can lightly grease it with olive oil.

- Add the broccolini, red onion, bell peppers, carrots, zucchini, sweet potatoes and chickpeas to a large mixing bowl. Stir together well, then add the olive oil, dried thyme and oregano, tamari, garlic, cumin, garlic powder and paprika, and mix together once again.
- Transfer the vegetables and chickpeas to the baking tray, spreading them out into a single layer. Bake in the preheated oven for 35-40 minutes, until all of the vegetables are cooked through and crispy.

Source: www.ohmyveggies.com

Have a plant-based recipe you'd like to share with the community? Send it to GROW@westchester-il.gov for consideration for future newsletters.