

"GREEN" MACHINES

Energy Australia and the Government's water efficiency scheme both highly recommend:

1. **Kleenmaid** KFL1600 front-loading washing machine, \$2899. 5-star energy rating, 4½-star water rating.
2. **Miele** W4466VPS front-loading washing machine, \$3199. 4-star energy rating, 4½-star water rating.



\$\$\$ Showering #2 = \$40+ saved a year

HOW? Use a shower timer. Reduce each eight-minute shower to six minutes and you'll save about \$40 a year.

\$\$\$ Toilets = \$50 saved a year

HOW? Install a dual-flush cistern. You can reduce water usage by up to 60 per cent with one of these – from 12 litres every flush to less than three litres. In the meantime, for a single-flush toilet Bunnings suggests placing a **full water bottle** (don't use a brick) in the cistern to reduce the amount of water used with each flush.

Top toilet The Government's water efficiency scheme recommends the **Caroma "Profile" toilet suite** with integrated handbasin (\$594; pictured below). This is the first 5-star water-rated toilet on the market that uses the same water twice – first for washing hands then for flushing.

It uses just 2.9 litres of water every flush.



CUT YOUR SHOWER TIME BY TWO MINUTES AND SAVE \$40 A YEAR

OUTDOORS

\$\$\$ Plant smart, water smart = \$200 saved a year

HOW? Grow native plants and water less. Helen Cushing, author of *Beyond Organics* (ABC Books), says this is the easiest way to save money and look after nature. "Natives are perfect for your climate and soil type and also encourage native birds," she says. "Plus, they generally don't need as much watering or feeding as exotic or introduced plant varieties." Look for the **"Flora For Fauna"** label on plants at the garden centre. It indicates plants that attract native fauna. According to Sydney Water, 25 per cent of Sydney's total household water consumption is used outdoors. So with an average annual water bill of \$713, you can save about \$100 each year just by cutting out much of your plant watering. And the way to do it is by having drought-tolerant natives in the garden.

And don't forget, in most areas you are not allowed to use the hose on hard surfaces. Use a broom instead.

\$\$\$ Greywater = \$60 saved a year

HOW? Divert used household water to your garden. Your plants will be happy and you'll save a "tank" of water outside. Most greywater systems provide adequate filtering of household cleaning products; however, you can also switch to greywater-safe products. Do a search for "greywater systems" online at choice.com.au for lots more useful advice and information.

The **Nylex Greywater Diverta** (\$165), a gravity-operated, easy-to-install system with no pumps or chemical additives, is a good buy. DIY kits start from \$165, and are available at major hardware stores.

\$\$\$ Home grown = \$20 saved a week

HOW? Plant a veggie patch. Imagine not having to spend a small fortune on fresh food every week – growing your own not only cuts down on fuel-hungry transport and pesticides, but you'll have fresh, super-tasty veggies, fruits and herbs from your own backyard all year round.

If you want to have a go at being semi-self-sufficient, these garden buys will help get you started: **Green 'N' Gold gardening gloves**, \$15.95, Garden Express. **Dynamic Lifter poultry manure fertiliser**, \$9.74 for 1.5kg; **blood and bone**, \$11.65 for 10kg; **Aussie Gold Sugar Cane Mulch**, \$7.50 for 3.5 sq m coverage (to keep soil moist and weeds minimal); all from Bunnings.

See, there are lots of simple solutions for the home that won't cost the earth! 🌱

GOOD BOOKS

Beyond Organics (ABC Books, \$29.95) Helen Cushing guides you through the organic garden. Available at gardenofwords.net
Grow It, Eat It (Penguin, \$29.95) The Royal Horticultural Society's book is great for teaching kids how to grow food the easy way.



BRILLIANT BATHROOM BUYS

Save water and money with these savvy solutions for the bathroom

1. **Caroma "Profile" toilet suite** with integrated handbasin (for details, see "Top toilet", above left).
2. Flexispray "Bermuda II" **wall shower** on fixed arm, \$40.15.
3. **Blue Star digital shower timer**, \$19.95, Ripple Products.
4. **Marlin shower rose** on fixed arm, \$46, Delrana Luxury Showers. 3 star WELS approved. For stockists, see page 160.



Visit the "Real Living" section at www.reallivingmag.com.au to find out which household energy-saving products entitle you to a government rebate. Also, check out the following for more eco info: waterrating.gov.au; energystars.gov.au; acfonline.org.au; savewater.com.au; greenbeings.com.au