

# Leaflet 2: Green water

## **What is green water?**

Sometimes known as recycled water, green water is an environmentally friendly source of water that is treated to a standard for uses such as toilet flushing, garden irrigation and vehicle washing.

Green water can be produced from harvesting rainwater or treating recovered waste water otherwise returned to rivers or a mixture of both. The concept of capturing rainwater and storing for later use is well documented from pre-Roman times and on all major continents.

This approach has already been widely adopted in several countries including Australia and the United States and was pioneered in the UK by Albion Water over a decade ago.

All green water is treated to a standard for toilet flushing, garden irrigation and vehicle washing only – it should not be used for any other domestic purposes such as drinking, cooking, bathing or brushing your teeth.

## **Why do we need green water?**

The climate is changing and weather patterns are forecast to alter. Winters are forecast to get wetter with summers likely to become drier. These changes also mean that droughts are more likely to occur in the future. We therefore need to invest in infrastructure which improves the resilience of our water supplies whilst at the same time protecting the wildlife, streams and rivers, and our environment generally.

Using green water reduces the amount of water abstracted from the environment to produce drinking water which puts less pressure on our wildlife and natural environment and reduces our carbon footprint and the otherwise environmental impact of pumping water over long distances.

Using green water also helps reduce the phosphorus loads in water returned to rivers which in turn reduces algal blooms, helping to maintain local ecosystems.

## **What are the benefits of having a green water system?**

Using green water is good for the wildlife, environment and carbon footprint. In addition to this, it will be cheaper than using the drinking water to flush your toilets and water your garden, meaning that you should save money on your water bill.

## **How can you use green water?**

The water that you use to flush your toilet is green water and the outside tap is supplied by the green water system.

## **How will my house be different to a standard house?**

You will have two water supply pipes coming into your home – one for drinking water and one for green water (each supply has a separate meter installed). These pipes can be found under your sink, either in a utility room or in your kitchen.

These pipes are clearly labelled and it is important that if any plumbing work is carried out, your qualified plumber is aware you have two types of water supply – the two should never be cross connected.

If you sell your home, you must make sure that the labels are still clearly visible and your purchasers are aware of the two supplies You can find an approved plumber at [watersafe.org.uk](http://watersafe.org.uk).



