WATER CONSERVATION FOR LAUNIUPOKO

1. **ADAPT** - Start adapting your plants to need less water by cutting back on your watering immediately, but gradually. Cut back to 70% for two to three weeks, then to 50%. This will encourage your plants to send their roots deeper and begin to get their own water. Most irrigation timers have a "seasonal adjust" setting on them. Just set that to 70%, then 50% later. Additionally, do not water every day! Tropical plants only require water 2-3 times a week, and natives and succulents only once a week or less. Watering every day (or worse several times a day) encourages surface roots and makes plants weak – and susceptible to winds. Established trees need very little irrigation water.
2. **MULCH** - Mulch all your plants heavily. Use wood chips (which also discourage snails), sawdust, newspaper, shredded leaves, compost or commercial organic mulch. This action conserves a great deal of water and also keeps roots cool. This step alone can cut your water needs by 50%. The breakdown of the mulch feeds soil biotica, which the plants need to take up water.
3. **ELIMINATE CHEMICALS** - Stop using chemical fertilizers – these kill soil biotica and make your plants need more and more water every day. Instead, build healthy soil – this is the foundation of all healthy plants - by incorporating lots of compost or organic matter into soil and mulching heavily. Worms will carry the organic matter down into the soil for you.
4. **DISCONTINUE GRASS** - Unfortunately, grass requires far more water than any other kinds of plants. Additionally, the requisite sprinkler system wastes a tremendous amount of water to wind and evaporation. This aerial water also encourages mold, fungus and snails. In general switch over to succulents (like ice plant), drought tolerant ground covers, natives and other low water use plants.
5. **SWITCH TO DRIP** - Switch all your irrigation over to drip irrigation. Drip requires far less water, far less water pressure, and far less flow demand on your system. Additionally, it places the water directly on the dirt and precisely where the plant needs it. No water is wasted and virtually none is lost to evaporation.
6. **RAIN SENSORS** – Most irrigation timers have a connection for a "Rain Sensor." These are relatively cheap and easy to install. When we have adequate rain, your irrigation will not dump more precious water on already saturated ground (which encourages snails). Buy and install these on every irrigation timer you have. This alone will save a lot of water. And set your timers so that only one circuit is on at a time – this will ease demand on the system.
7. **REPAIR LEAKS** – Inspect your system regularly and fix leaks promptly. Leaks are responsible for a lot of our water use!

WARNING: If you choose to switch your irrigation system to potable water, you must have this done by a licensed professional and inspected by LWC. There is a great danger of contaminating our drinking water supply with agricultural water, which is under higher pressure. There are specific requirements for this including backflow prevention and isolation of the two systems to prevent cross-contamination. Get specs from Launiupoko Water Company, use a licensed professional, and get the system inspected by LWC before turning it on!