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I Know What A Green Thumb Is, What Is A Blue Thumb?

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ask A Specialist

A weekly question/answer column

I Know What A Green Thumb Is, What Is A Blue Thumb?

Kitt Farrell-Poe answers:*

A blue thumb is to water what a green thumb is to plants. It both cases, people have a hand in making something better. When individuals, organizations, communities, and local governments act in ways that have a positive effect on water, they are using a "blue thumb." The blue thumb logo and its motto "Give Drinking Water A Hand" originated with the 1992 celebration of Drinking Water Week and they have become the common denominator for year-round events that provide information and education about water issues.

Now you know what a "blue thumb" is, did you know:

- There is the same amount of water on earth as there was when the Earth was formed. The water from your faucet could contain molecules that dinosaurs drank.
- Water is composed of two elements, Hydrogen and Oxygen. 2 Hydrogen + 1 Oxygen = H_2O.
- Nearly 97% of the world's water is salty or otherwise undrinkable. Another 2% is locked in ice caps and glaciers. That leaves just 1% for all of humanity's needs--all its agricultural, residential, manufacturing, community, and personal needs.
- Water regulates the Earth's temperature. It also regulates the temperature of the human body, carries nutrients and oxygen to cells, cushions joints, protects organs and tissues, and removes wastes.
- 75% of the human brain is water and 75% of a living tree is water.
- A person can live about a month without food, but only about a week without water.
- Water is part of a deeply interconnected system. What we pour on the ground ends up in our water, and what we spew into a sky ends up in our water.
- The average total home water use for each person in the U.S. is about 50 gallons a day.
- The average cost for water supplied to a home in the U.S. in about $2.00 for 1,000 gallons, which equals about 5 gallons for a penny.
- Water expands by 9 percent when it freezes. Frozen water (ice) is lighter than water, which is why ice floats in water.

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* Kitt Farrell-Poe is Utah State University Extension Water Quality Specialist