

Using recycled water on fruit and vegetables in the Rouse Hill area

Frequently asked questions

In December 2012, Sydney Water obtained approval from NSW Health for recycled water produced at our Rouse Hill treatment plant to be used on fruit and vegetables.

Sydney Water has always told us not to use recycled water on fruit and vegetables. Why have you changed your mind?

The Rouse Hill Recycled Water Scheme has been running successfully since 2001. The water recycling plant produces high quality recycled water that easily meets all the relevant health and safety standards for watering fruit and vegetables.

Because using recycled water around the home was quite a new concept in 2001 when the scheme started, the rules for the use of water were particularly strict. It is no longer necessary for customers to avoid watering fruit and vegetables with recycled water.

The change to our rules brings us into line with most of the other major recycled water schemes in Australia, which already allow the watering of fruit and vegetables with high quality recycled water.

Who approved the changes?

NSW Health approved the use of recycled water on fruit and vegetables.

To obtain approval, Sydney Water had to provide detailed information about the quality of water we provide, how we run the Rouse Hill Recycled Water Scheme, and what safeguards are in place.

Is it really safe to use recycled water on fruit and vegetables?

Yes. Recycled water is safe to use on fruit and vegetables, as long as you wash the garden produce with cool drinking water immediately before cooking or eating. This simple step is also advisable when eating fruit and vegetables that are irrigated with drinking water.

The NSW Food Authority recommends that all fruit and vegetables be washed in cool drinking water before cooking or eating.

Will recycled water harm my fruit and vegetables?

Recycled water has been used successfully across thousands of gardens in the Rouse Hill area for well over 10 years.

Our recycled water comfortably meets the relevant guidelines for watering food crops. More information can be found in our *Gardening with recycled water* fact sheet.

Do any other water authorities allow recycled water to be used on fruit and vegetables?

Yes. Nearly all of the residential recycled water schemes in Australia allow and encourage people to water fruit and vegetables with recycled water.

These include:

- Newington village, managed by the Sydney Olympic Park Authority
- Phillip Island Recycled Water Scheme
- several residential recycled water schemes in Victoria's Yarra Valley area.

What's the advantage of watering fruit and vegetables with recycled water?

You'll save money, as recycled water is 20% cheaper than drinking water.

You will also help save drinking water. By using recycled water, local residents and businesses utilise an otherwise wasted resource, saving about 2 billion litres of drinking water each year.

What if I'm not comfortable using recycled water on my salad vegetables?

That's okay. It's fine to continue using drinking water to water garden produce. Watering with recycled water is optional.

Where can I find more information about recycled water?

Visit the 'Recycling and reuse' section of our website, sydneywater.com.au.

Our recycled water fact sheets include *Using recycled water around your home in the Rouse Hill area* and *Gardening with recycled water*. These are also available to print from our website.