

HALLELUJAH! It is raining! In fact for the last few weeks I have been hoping that we would get a glimpse of the typically grey and wet British weather that we are so used to. No, I have not taken leave of my senses and I am not saying this because I am one of those people who love to complain about everything including the weather. "It's always grey and miserable in London", when it rains and "it's way too hot and we are just not equipped to deal with this kind of heat" when it is sunny! Normally I would be rejoicing at the absolutely glorious weather we have been having over here. Blue skies, sun shining, birds singing (ok a bit of artistic license here) --- I almost feel like I am in a scene from "The Sound of Music" and on the verge of bursting into song. It has been such a nice change to finally be able to put away the long coats and thick cardigans in exchange for some summer clothes and to have the luxury of wandering around London in my open toed sandals and making use of my sunglasses which seem to gather dust for most of the year. But I have been feeling rather guilty about enjoying the wonderful weather. There is a valid reason for my remorse and that is because we are currently suffering from a drought in England.

It is quite shocking to know that South-east England has been affected by one of its worst droughts on record. We have been having months of rainfall that has been below average and some areas are suffering from one of the worst droughts since the 1920s. According to the papers, March was the 17th month in a row of sub-normal rainfall. Even if average rainfall returns to normal for the time of year, over the next few months there will still in all probability be a shortage in the water supply. In the developing world the average usage of water is only 20 litres a day. But in the UK we use around 165 litres a day which is a rather staggering figure and to make matters even worse, a third of which is used to flush our



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Wishing for Rain

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toilets! When you are living in what is supposed to be a developed country the last thing you tend to worry about is whether you will have enough drinking water or water for a shower or for watering your plants. Currently a total of around 13 million people in southern Britain are affected by a hosepipe ban (Guardian Newspaper). Although there still seems to be a bit of confusion as to what this ban may or may not include there is a restriction on watering plants in the garden with a hosepipe or using sprinklers or even washing cars with a hose.

It is a fact that there is quite a lot of misuse of water by households that can easily be remedied but even so this would not change the situation dramatically, as one of the major problems is the fact that the water companies-- especially in the south-east--are losing an unbelievable amount of water each day in leakages. Thames Water seems to have the worst record for fixing the existing leaks. It has missed its target for preventing leaks for the last four years, and last year 915 million litres a day leaked from the company's pipes.