CITY OF TROUP, TEXAS

Let’s Talk About the Color in Your Water

Why your tap water is sometimes tinted — and why it’s perfectly safe

Have you ever filled a glass and noticed a light tea or golden color? You’re definitely not the only one — folks ask us about this all the time, and it’s a great question. So here’s the friendly rundown.

What’s that color?

It comes from something completely natural called tannins. Tannins come from plants, and here’s the neat part: as wood, bark, and leaves slowly break down deep underground over thousands of years, they release tannins right into the water. It’s the very same thing that happens when you dunk a tea bag in hot water and watch it turn golden brown. So really, the tint is just a little signature of the East Texas ground our water comes from.

Is it safe to drink? You bet.

> **Absolutely.** Tannins are not a health risk at all. The color is about how the water looks, not whether it’s good for you. In fact, you probably enjoy tannins every day — they’re in tea, coffee, red wine, and grape juice! The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency even treats water color as a “looks and taste” matter, not a safety one. So drink up with confidence.

Where does it come from?

Our water is pulled from deep wells, 500 to 1,000 feet down. Down there, our corner of East Texas sits on:

- **Lignite** — a soft brown coal made of ancient plants, and the biggest source of the color.
- **Rich clay soils** — which hold onto old plant matter. (It’s why we have clay mines and such a proud brick-making history!)
- **Beautiful thick forests** — which add leaves and wood to the ground over time.

As water travels slowly through all of that, it picks up a gentle natural tint — kind of like a slow-brewed cup of tea.

Why not just take the color out?

Great question! Tannins are dissolved right into the water, so a regular filter can’t catch them — removing them takes special, costly treatment. There’s also a trade-off worth knowing about: strong chlorine could clear most of the color, but it would create other byproducts that are regulated for health reasons. To keep those byproducts nice and low, we use a gentler disinfectant called chloramine. That keeps your water safe and sound, even if it leaves a touch more of that natural color behind.

The bottom line

The light color in your water is natural, totally common across East Texas, and completely safe. We care about your water just as much as you do, and we’re always working hard to bring you the best, safest, and most affordable water we can. If you ever have a question, please reach out — we’re always happy to help.