

LANDSCAPE SURVIVAL TIPS FOR A *HOT, DRY SUMMER*

When Landscape Watering is **Limited**

Check Sprinklers Monthly

Especially in a drought, it's important to check your sprinklers each month for water-wasting problems. These include sprinklers that are broken, leaking, tilted, clogged, spraying the sidewalk and misting versus spraying from too much pressure. Turn off water to the problem area and make repairs within 48 hours.

Soak and Cycle

Some sprinkler systems apply water faster than the ground will absorb, causing water to runoff your landscape into the street and gutter. Here's how to stop runoff using the "soak and cycle" method:

- Turn on sprinklers and see how long it takes for water to begin running off.
- Adjust your sprinkler timer to water in three shorter segments.
(If water begins running off after two minutes – but your landscape needs six minutes of watering time – set your timer to water in three shorter segments of two minutes each.)
- Leave an hour between watering times to allow water to soak into the soil.



Water Early or Later

Watering early in the day or later at night conserves water by allowing water to soak into the soil before evaporation can whisk it away.

Mulch, Mulch, Mulch!

Mulch is like icing on a cake, because it keeps the soil moist the way icing keeps a cake moist. Mulch slows evaporation, allowing water to sink into the soil, moderates soil temperature and breaks down into nutrients for plants. Be sure to add two to three inches of organic mulch (e.g., leaves, wood chips) around trees and plants for the greatest benefit.

Use the Screwdriver Test

The best way to tell if you need to water is by testing. Stick an eight-inch screwdriver into the ground. If you can push it more than three inches below the surface, your landscape does not need to be watered.

Leave Grass Long

Adjust the height setting on your mower up one or two notches. Taller grass promotes a deeper, more extensive root system with increased drought tolerance, reduces evaporation and shades out weeds.



Learn about your water provider's watering guidelines, water-smart tips and resources at:

BeWaterSmart.info



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When Landscape Watering is **Not Allowed**

Prioritize

Prioritize your landscape into three categories:

- High value/must save (including valuable trees and shrubs that have taken years to establish, will die without water and have many benefits)
- Moderate value/try to save (including certain perennials, newer shrubs that can be replaced and low-water use and native plants that will require little water anyway once established)
- Low value/save if possible (including lawn, which can often bounce back successfully from drying out, and annuals)

Ration Water Across Your Landscape

Use limited supplies to water high-value trees and plants first. This will help them survive the drought. If there is sufficient water, move on to the moderate- and low-value plants.



Add Compost and Mulch

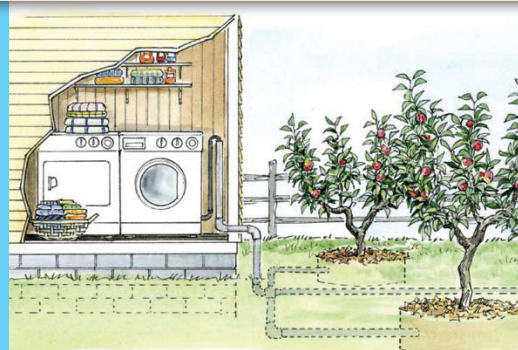
Adding compost to soil builds a support system for plants. The sponge-like nature of compost means that any water applied to your landscape will be absorbed and stay in your soil. Follow compost with two to three inches of organic mulch to slow evaporation, protect roots, and moderate soil temperature.

Befriend the Bucket

Place buckets in your kitchen and bathroom sinks to capture water that can then be put on plants outside. If you take a bath, don't drain the water. Instead, use buckets to haul the bath water outside. You can also keep a bucket in the shower to capture water as it warms up. Be sure to use plant-friendly soaps (biodegradable, non-toxic, sodium and borax free) to avoid harming your plants.

Consider Gray Water

During drought, slightly used water can maximize water efficiency inside your home while keeping precious plants and trees alive. Gray water includes water from bathtubs, showers, bathroom washbasins, clothes washers and laundry tubs, but does not include wastewater from kitchen sinks or dishwashers. Note that gray water systems are guided by state building and permitting codes. You should check with your local government and county health department for guidelines.



Consult a Green Gardener

Green Gardeners are landscape professionals trained in sustainable, water-wise landscaping. They can help you determine the minimum amount of water required to keep plants alive and develop strategies for helping your landscape survive the drought.