



Managing a *waterSmart* Landscape -- Without Irrigation --

TIPS

Help your plants use less water. Cut back annuals and perennials during dry spells. They'll bounce back when it rains again.

Collect water to keep your valuable plants alive. You'll be surprised at how much drips from your air conditioner, and at how much you catch in a rain barrel under your downspouts.

Prioritize plants. When water is scarce, give it to your valuable or irreplaceable trees and shrubs first. Don't worry about annuals and turf grasses that are easy to replace.

Don't stress your plants. Don't fertilize when you can't water it in. And set your mower blade higher than normal to help keep your lawn alive during a drought.

Mulch. Cover the entire area from the trunk to the ends of the branches with pine straw, bark chips or shredded hardwood mulch. Use newspapers underneath to help the soil retain moisture.

A slight adjustment to your lawn mower can drastically increase lawn survival during a drought. Encourage deeper rooting by raising the mower blade during dry weather. Cutting the grass a little higher raises lawn survival rates and decreases water demand. Sharp blades also help reduce the need for water because dull blades shred leaf tips, causing the turf to use more water than necessary.

Adjust your mower to a higher setting and mow more frequently. Consider leaving clippings on the lawn. Longer grass blades provide shade and help hold in moisture longer.

Keep off the grass. Avoid walking on grass during periods of drought stress. Mow lawns as little as possible during droughts to avoid additional stress, and cut at the highest possible setting. Never remove more than 1/3 of the leaf blade in one mowing. Allow mulched clippings to remain on the lawn to help cool the soil and retain moisture.

Aerate your lawn. Aeration improves the movement of water and nutrients into the soil, decreases run-off and encourages the roots of grass to grow deeply and to become drought tolerant.

For more *waterSmart* tips,
visit www.ConserveWaterGeorgia.net.

For more information about the drought and current drought response levels,
visit www.gaepd.org.

Information compiled by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (www.gaepd.org) and collected from the UGA College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (www.caes.uga.edu), the California Urban Water Conservation Council (www.h2ouse.net), the Massachusetts Drought Management Task Force (www.mass.gov/dep/water), and EPA WaterSense (www.epa.gov/watersense).

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