



You Can Still Garden During A Drought!

Info For the Connecticut Gardener:

By employing water conservation techniques, homeowners and green industry professionals can conserve our water resources while keeping their gardens and landscapes green.

If you are a member of the gardening public and have questions about how to garden through the drought, your local CNLA member garden center or landscape contractor will be pleased to assist and answer questions.



Here are some water-wise tips:

- Plant the right plants in the right spots—shade plants for shade and sun-loving plants for a sunny area. Don't put a thirsty plant in an area where you know you're going to have to water it constantly. Plants planted in the wrong place are the first to get hurt in a drought.
 - Avoid planting thirsty plants in areas of your landscape that are windy; constant winds take moisture away from a plant and the soil.
 - Group water-hungry plants together; group drought resistant plants together.
- Use native plants in your landscape—they require less care and water than ornamental varieties.
- Know your soil! Does it retain moisture or does it dry out quickly? Is the soil heavy in clay or rocks and gravel? Again, plant the right plants for the right soils in your yard. If you have an area that you notice is often wet, plant thirsty plants there.
- Help your garden soils by using mulches, which dramatically reduce water evaporation from soils. In tough dry times, increase the mulch layers to 3-4 inches thick. Also consider mixing water-retaining amendments to your garden beds, such as peat moss or any of the water-retention soil amendments available at your garden center.
- When using mulch, be sure your trees, shrubs, and plants have a basin of mulch around them. When things are dry, the water tends to run off quickly and not soak down into the soil. Creating a basin around plants holds the water in until it has an opportunity to soak into the ground.
- Don't fertilize or prune. Your plants should not be encouraged to grow and both pruning and fertilizing can encourage new growth. Fertilizers are salts, and without much water, the salts can build to harmful levels.
- Remove any dead or weakened plant tissues to avoid secondary problems.
- Employ the shade strategy! Does your landscape have shade trees strategically planted to give partial sun to your gardens? Scientists have shown that shade trees help retain moisture and cool your home and your landscape—by as much as 20 degrees during the highest heat of the day.
- Raise your lawn mower cutting height—longer grass blades help shade each other, cut down on evaporation, and inhibit weed growth.
- Consider reducing your lawn and grassy areas in favor of more creative gardens, such as those that use more stone and drought-resistant perennial plants that have deeper root systems. Ask your nursery or landscape professional about using the new elegant paver block systems to create a patio or walkway.
- Dress up your garden. Since your garden may not be at its best, consider adding some items that add ambience: benches, wind chimes, colorful flags or wind socks, boulders or stonework, sculptures, or pots to name a few. Your garden center has these.
- Weed-out your garden! Weeds compete with your plants for water.
- As a general rule, plants with gray or silvery foliage are the best drought-tolerant. They have fine hairs on their leaves that shade the leaf surface. Also consider using succulent plants (Yucca, etc.).

Watering

- Use recycled water whenever you can. "Recycled water" includes rainwater collected from rooftops, cooking water, or any other water that has not been used for human or animal use.

Prioritize Your Watering:

- **FIRST:** Trees, shrubs, or perennials planted recently, expensive specimen plants, or plants that are especially important to you should get the focus of your watering attention.
- **SECOND:** Shallow rooted plants like azaleas, rhododendrons, hollies, birch, dogwoods, and blueberries should be your second priority. Watch them for signs of stress.
- **THIRD:** New lawns should come next. Grass seed is cheaper than most landscape plants.
- **FOURTH:** Annuals, container plants, and vegetable gardens may be your last priority.
- **FIFTH:** Established trees, shrubs and perennials can surprise you with how long they can go without water.
- Consider installing an irrigation system that waters the right areas, at the right time, in smaller amounts for maximum conservation. Seek the guidance or assistance of a professional landscaper, irrigation contractor, or garden center professional to help you. These systems are probably best used between 5 p.m. and 9 a.m. and may be a lifesaver for your plants.
- Avoid sprinklers that only scatter water in the air inefficiently. Professionals use drip irrigation, special hoses or pipes that dribble water slowly directly to a plant's root systems. Use the flat soaking hoses to water your garden.

Useful Drought Action Links:

- Connecticut state government: www.drought.state.ct.us
- National Drought Mitigation Center: www.drought.unl.edu/ndmc
- Federal government: www.drought.noaa.gov

DROUGHT-TOLERANT PLANTS

Annuals (sun):

Ageratum
Alyssum
Amaranth
Angelonia
Annual Baby's Breath
Celosia
Cosmos
Creeping Zinnia (Sanvitalia)
Dianthus
Dusty Miller
Flowering Tobacco (Nicotiana)
Gazania
Geranium
Gloriosa Daisy
Lantana
Marigold
Melampodium
Mexican Sunflower
Nasturtium
Petunia
Phlox
Portulaca
Salvia
Strawflower
Sunflowers
Verbena
Vinca
Zinnia

Annuals (part shade):

Ageratum
Alyssum
Begonias
Annual Baby's Breath
Dianthus
Dusty Miller
Flowering Tobacco (Nicotiana)
Melampodium
Nasturtium
Phlox
Blue Salvia
Spider Flower (Cleome)
Verbena

Perennials (part shade):

Corydalis
Creeping Phlox
Daylilies
Dianthus
Epimedium (Barrenwort)
Ferns: Dryopteris, Osmunda,
Pellaea, & Pteridium
Heuchera
Hosta
Lamium
Liriope
Pulmonaria
Purple Coneflower
Santolina
Verbena

Trees & Shrubs (sun):

Abelia
Atlas Cedar
Barberry
Bearberry
Bayberry
Beautybush
Blue Mist Shrub (Caryopteris)
Burning Bush
Butterfly Bush
Colorado Blue Spruce
Cotoneaster
Crabapple
Crape Myrtle
Ginkgo
Green Ash
Goldenrain Tree
Honeylocust
Japanese Pagoda Tree (Sophora)
Juniper
Mock Orange
Mugo Pine
Nine-Bark
Potentilla
Privet
Pryacantha
Red and Pin Oaks
Rugosa and Shrub Roses
Russian Olive
Scotch Broom
St. John's Wort
Smokebush
Spirea
Tree lilac
Viburnum
Quince
Washington Hawthorn
Witch Hazel
Yew
Zelkova

Trees & Shrubs (part shade):

Abelia
Barberry
Bearberry
Bayberry
Kerria
Mock Orange
Privet
Stewartia
Viburnum
Witch Hazel
Yew

Perennials (sun):

Agastache
Amsonia
Artemisia
Asclepias
Aster
Perennial Baby's Breath
Baptisia
Black-Eyed Susans (Rudbeckia)
Boltonia
Campanula
Catnip
Coreopsis
Creeping Phlox
Daylilies
Dianthus
Echinops
Euphorbia
Fountain Grass
Festuca
Gaillardia
Gaura
Goldenrod
Helenium
Hen and Chicks
Hibiscus
Hollyhocks
Lamb's Ears
Lavender
Liatris
Liriope
Miscanthus
Oregano
Penstemon
Physostegia
Prickly Pear Cactus
Purple Coneflower
Rock Cress
Russian Sage
Salvia
Santolina
Sea Holly
Sedum
Siberian Iris
Snow-In-Summer (Cerastium)
Thyme
Verbena
Veronica
Yarrow
Yucca