

REDUCING PESTICIDES

it's perfectly natural.



WISE AND EFFECTIVE USE OF WATER IN YOUR ORGANIC GARDEN

Environmentally friendly gardeners conserve water. By using water more efficiently we protect our water sources, limit pollution, and preserve our precious water supply. This fact sheet provides tips to conserve water as well as suggestions for drought-resistant plants.

Useful Tips for Effective Water Use

- Install rain barrels – 1000 sq. ft. roof = 150 gallons of water from ¼-inch of rainfall. The water is soft, temperate and free. Place a rain barrel at the base of each downspout. Use this water for potted plants and for soaker hoses extended into the garden.
- Use soaker hoses – Soaker hoses can be attached to rain barrels or to the garden hose. Drip irrigation is a more efficient method of watering the gardens as significantly less water is lost in evaporation compared to sprinkler systems.
- Water early in the morning – More water is taken up by the plants in the morning and made available to them in the hottest part of the day and far less water evaporates. Avoid watering on hot, sunny or windy days to reduce extreme water loss due to evaporation.
- Watch the weather – Measure the rainfall. A healthy lawn needs 2.5 cm (1 inch) of water per week, including rainfall. One good soak is better than frequent light sprinklings since it will encourage deep roots which are more drought resistant.
- Mowing – Cut grass at 7.5 cm (3 inches) to prevent drying and to choke out weeds.
- Group plants according to moisture needs – Keep drought tolerant plants together and water sparingly in these areas. If the garden slopes, put more drought-tolerant plants higher than those needing more water, since water drains down.
- Mulch your garden – Mulch 8-12 cm (3 – 5 inches) to keep the soil cool, help retain moisture, and reduce weeds. The best times to mulch are late spring and in late autumn. Remove mulch in late winter so the soil will warm quickly for vegetable planting.
- Add humus, compost or leaf mulch to the soil – Done on a regular basis, this helps soil retain moisture and reduces the need for watering.
- Select plants wisely – Choose drought-tolerant plants. Plants with grey, fuzzy, fragrant, waxy or finely divided leaves are more drought-tolerant. Silver leaves reflect the drying heat of the sun so they don't lose as much water. Larger leaves require more water. Plant ground covers to help retain moisture and keep out weeds.
- Time your planting – The best time to plant water-efficient plants is late summer or early fall. All plants need to be watered well until established.
- Prioritize watering – Take care of new or young plants first, water less drought-tolerant areas next, and let your lawn go dormant in summer.



This fact sheet has been prepared by the Toronto Master Gardeners



- Install windbreaks – Wind dries out the soil. A fence or tall plants provide a windbreak for the garden, which will give some protection for up to 20 times its height.
- Use air-conditioner or dehumidifier runoff – Find the air-conditioner drain line and collect the water for plants or extend the tube to a nearby garden area. You could also hook this runoff into a drip water system for potted plants.

Water Efficient Plant Suggestion

Evergreens

Euonymus
Juniperus (Juniper)
Pinus mugo (Mugo Pine)
Yucca

Vines

Clematis
Lonicera (Honeysuckle)
Parthenocissus quinquefolia
 (Virginia Creeper)

Trees

Acer saccharinum
 (Silver Maple)
Fraxinus pennsylvanica
 (Green Ash)
Malus (Crabapple)
Morus (Mulberry)
Quercus macrocarpa (Bur Oak)

Shrubs

Acer ginnala (Amur Maple)
Potentilla (Cinquefoil)
Cydonia (edible Quince)
Kolkwitzia amabilis
 (Beautybush)
Lonicera tatarica
 (Honeysuckle)
Lavandula (Lavender)
Myrica pennsylvannia
 (Bayberry)
Rosa rugosa (Rugosa Rose)
Rosa acicularis (Wild Rose)
Rhus (Sumac)
Spirea
Syringa (Lilac)

Ornamental Grasses

Arrhenatherum (Oat)
Calamagrostis (Reed)
Festuca (Fescues)
Helictotrichon sempervirens
 (Blue Oat)
Phalaris arundinacea (Ribbon)
Stipa (Feather)

Bulbs (Most are excellent)

Allium
Chionodoxa
Colchicum
Fritillaria
Iris Bucharica
Kniphofia
Lillium
Narcissus
Tulips

Groundcovers

Artemisia
Ajuga reptans (Bugle weed)
Phlox (Creeping Phlox)
Sedum
Thymus (Thyme)
Vinca minor (Periwinkle)

Annuals

Alyssum
Amaranthus caudatus
 (Love Lies Bleeding)
Celosia (Cockscomb)
Centaurea (Bachelor Buttons)
Cleome
Cosmos
Gaura
Gazania
Helianthus annuus
 (Sunflowers)
Helichrysum
Mirabilis jalapa (Four
 O'Clock)
Myrrhis odorata (Sweet Cicely)
Nicotiana
Papaver (Poppies)
Pelargonium sp.
 (Scented Geranium)
Portulaca
Salvia (Sage)
Tagetes (Marigolds)
Thymophylla tenuiloba
 (Dahlberg Daisy)
Verbena bonariensis
Zinnia

Perennials

Achillea (Yarrow)
Agastache H. (Anise)
Alcea rosea (Hollyhock)
Alchemilla mollis
 (Lady's mantle)
Alyssum
Antennaria (Pussytoes)
Armeria (Thrift)
Artemisia (Wormwood)
Aubretia
Bergenia
Campanula (Bellflower)
Chrysanthemum
Coreopsis
Delphinium
Dianthus
Echinacea (Coneflower)
Erigeron (Fleabane)
Eryngium (Sea Holly)
Euphorbia
Gaillardia
Geranium
Gypsophila (Baby's breath)
Helianthemum (Rock Rose)
Hemerocallis (Day Lily)
Heuchera (Coral Bells)
Knautia macedonica (Scabious)
Leucanthemum (Shasta Daisy)
Liatris spicata (Blazing Star)
Linum perenne (Flax)
Lychnis
Nepeta (Catmint)
Oenothera (Sundrop)
Phlox
Papaver (Poppies)
Potentilla
Pulsatilla
Rudbeckia
Scabiosa
Scutellaria (Helmet flower)
Sedum
Sempervivum (Hens & chicks)
Stachys byzantina (Lamb's ear)
Verbascum