



## How to Properly Water During Summer Drought

Given the warm temperatures and little amount of rain, you'd think it was the middle of August. But it's only the end of June! According to weather forecasters, it appears the heat wave and extremely dry conditions are expected to last for several months. So what's a gardener to do? Here are a few tips to help your garden survive this unusual summer:

- Water by hand during the drought. Sprinkling is just not efficient or sufficient given the warm conditions. Soak the soil around each plant at their base and then water in between the plants as well. Water enough to penetrate the mulch layer and to reach the soil below.
- Do not water the leaves, stems and flowers. Only the roots need water. When you water the whole plant you create opportunities for powdery mildew or other diseases to attack your plants.
- Water plants in the early morning because water evaporates easily in the heat of the day. This will also allow your garden to dry out before evening.
- Focus on your trees, evergreens and shrubs first. They are your most significant investment. Next water your perennials, groundcover and ornamental grasses. Let your lawn go dormant - it will recover once it begins to rain again.
- Water your trees at the drip line, at the end of the canopy, not at the trunk. That's where the feeder roots are located.
- Water proactively. We're expecting 100 degrees on Thursday. Water both Wednesday and Thursday morning if necessary in anticipation of the high temperatures. If the top ½ inch of soil is dry, then water.
- Cut back any dead foliage or flowers to help keep your garden looking neat and tidy. It will also promote the growth of new foliage so that when the drought is over, the plant will recover.

With the strong possibility that warmer temperatures are here to stay, we'll have to adapt our gardens and ourselves to these new conditions. Properly water your garden now and you will be able to help it through these extreme conditions. In the next newsletter issue, we'll highlight a number of garden-worthy, native plants that once established can tolerate the heat and the drought.

[Review even more detailed watering instructions.](#)

***Reprinted from MODE Landscape Design Vol 9: Dog Days of Summer...Already?, June 2012***

