

# How to garden during drought conditions

What can I do to help my garden live through a drought?

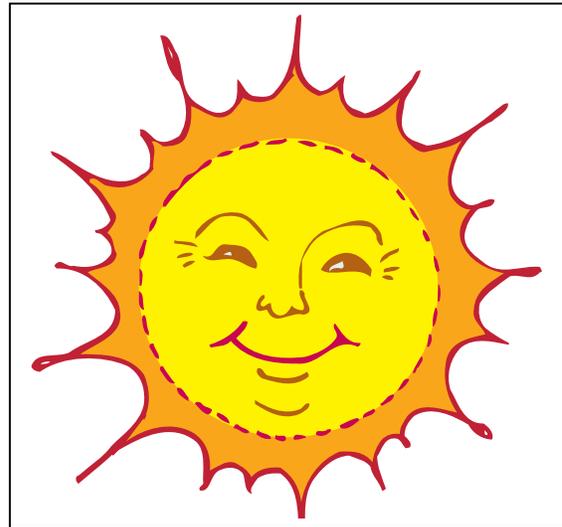
★Limit the size of your lawn and how close it is to trees, shrubs, and gardens.

Lawn grasses need more water than many of the plants you grow in your garden. When grass is near other plants it usually gets most of the water because grass has very thick, shallow roots. If you can do it, try removing the grass out to the end of the tree's branches. Then mulch the grass-free area. Now the tree roots will get the first chance at the water that falls to the ground. The same idea applies to your garden plants; if the grass isn't there to compete for rainwater then your plants will get more of the moisture. Also get rid of the weeds that compete with your plants for water.

★Save rainwater for your plants.

Even during times of drought, some rain will fall! Save as much of that water as you can by putting a rain collector under the downspouts from your roof. In the house, save the water that you run from the tap while you're waiting for the temperature to get hot or cold. In

Pennsylvania, we cannot use water that has been in contact with people (bath water, shower water, or dishwater) to water our plants.



★Mulch and mulch properly.

Use 2 to 3 inches of mulch around trees and shrubs, 1 to 2 inches around vegetable and flower plants. Mulch will keep the soil temperature cooler and it will keep moisture in the ground rather than letting it go out into the environment. By using an organic mulch such as bark or leaves, you will also be adding organic material and nutrients to the soil.

★ Choose drought-tolerant plants.

There are plants out there that can survive high heat, high humidity, and low water conditions. These plants can be annuals or perennials. Try to purchase drought-tolerant plants at your local garden center. If you plant these plants you won't have to worry about them as much as those plants which are not drought-tolerant.

Here is a list of annuals that are known to be heat and/or drought-tolerant:

Alyssum	Amaranth	Cleome (Spider flower)
Cosmos	Gaillardia (Blanket Flower)	Gloriosa Daisy
Four O'clock	Marigold	Morning Glory
Ornamental Pepper	Petunia	Phlox
Pincushion Flower (Scabiosa)	Portulaca	Salvia
Sunflower	Verbena	Zinnia

Perennials that are known to tolerate drought and dry soils include:

Yarrow ( <i>Achillea species</i> )	Sneezewort ( <i>Achillea ptarmica</i> )
Stonecress ( <i>Aethionema species</i> )	Hollyhock ( <i>Alcea rugosa</i> )
Golden marguerite ( <i>Anthemis tinctoria</i> )	Butterflyweed ( <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> )
New England Aster ( <i>Aster novae-angliae</i> )	Serbian Bellflower ( <i>Campanula poscharskyana</i> )
Bachelor's Button ( <i>Centaurea species</i> )	Snow-in-Summer ( <i>Cerastium tomentosum</i> )
Tickseed ( <i>Coreopsis grandiflora</i> )	Grass Pink ( <i>Dianthus plumarius</i> )
Steel Globe Thistle ( <i>Echinops ritro</i> )	Sunflower ( <i>Helianthus</i> )
Flowering Spurge ( <i>Euphorbia corollata</i> )	St. John's Wort ( <i>Hypericum cerastiodes</i> )
Statice ( <i>Limonium latifolium</i> )	Musk Mallow ( <i>Malva moschata</i> )
Iceland Poppy ( <i>Papaver nudicaule</i> )	Hedge Rose ( <i>Rose rugosa</i> )
Virginia rose ( <i>Rosa virginiana</i> )	Rue ( <i>Ruta graveolens</i> )
Goldenglow ( <i>Rudbeckia</i> )	Sage ( <i>Salvia species</i> )
Common Yucca ( <i>Yucca filamentosa</i> )	

References:

Loos, M. T. Drought Resistance in the Home Landscape, Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet.  
Penn State Master Gardener Manual

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