

Preparing Your Plants for Drought by Shawn Jadrnicek

With the lack of rain lately I've seen hardy weeds wilting like wet noodles. Some simple practices can help your plants and lawn make it through the hot dry weather and rebound with a vigor. When watering your plants and lawn be sure to water infrequently and deep about 1" per week. This will insure the plants develop a deep root system that will find water during dry times. Shallow frequent watering of plants can lead to shallow roots and disease problems from the excess moisture on the leaves.

When it comes to lawn irrigation, you have two choices during long, dry, hot periods. You can water the grass and keep it green or don't water and let the grass turn brown and go dormant. Whatever lawn care option you choose, stick with it.

When it comes to landscape plants, choosing drought tolerant plants will take the stress out of dry times. For example, ornamental grasses, Yarrow, Yucca, Prickly Pear Cactus and others require little to no water once established. For a complete list of drought tolerant plants contact your local Clemson Extension office.

With the plants you have, focus watering on new transplants that have not developed a large root system and always water to the outer edge or drip line of the plant. Mulching plants will help hold moisture in the soil and prevents weeds from growing that can compete for moisture. Droughts are a part of life in South Carolina so prepare your landscape and you will not only succeed but you will also save money on your water bill.

Shawn Jadrnicek an agent with the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service for Colleton/Jasper County. To sign up for the next Master Gardener class call (843) 549-2595 ext.113.