

Homeowner Drought Tips

There are many ways gardeners can conserve water while still maintaining an attractive landscape. Detailed explanations of the following tips can be found in the Extension publication, HG25, **Xeriscaping and Conserving Water in the Landscape**. Download this publication from <http://www.hgic.umd.edu/media/documents/hg25.pdf>

- ◆ Water in the morning
- ◆ Water infrequently, deeply and slowly
- ◆ Prevent water from running off the landscape
- ◆ Repair leaky hose connections and irrigation components
- ◆ Turn off automatic sprinkler systems when it is raining
- ◆ Mow lawn high
- ◆ Mulch plants
- ◆ Plant in beds (mass plantings)
- ◆ Use soaker hoses or drip irrigation in beds
- ◆ Reduce lawn area
- ◆ Control weeds
- ◆ Improve soil's water holding capacity
- ◆ Make small earthen basins around newly planted trees and shrubs to catch water and hold it for the roots to absorb



Zinnia elegans
'Magellan Coral'



Catharanthus rosea
'First Kiss Blueberry'

Drought conditions also predispose trees and shrubs to borers and canker diseases, which can be fatal. Keep young and obviously stresses trees and shrubs watered during dry periods.

There may be times when you have to sacrifice plants because of watering restrictions. Sacrifice annuals, perennials and lawns while concentrating watering efforts on trees and shrubs. The former can be replanted more inexpensively than the latter.

Water Conservation Tools

There are many tools gardeners can use to conserve water while maintaining an attractive landscape.

- ◆ Many hand-held nozzles have **shutoff valves**. Shut off the hose when moving between plants.
- ◆ Consider investing in a **water wand**, which will water plants gently and has a shutoff valve.
- ◆ Consider using a few **rain barrels** in the landscape. They store rainwater for use later, when you really need it. Make sure mosquito screening covers all openings.
- ◆ The use of **soaker hoses** and **drip irrigation systems** help deliver water efficiently to the roots of plants.

Use Gray Water

Gray water is any wastewater (except water from toilets) that has been generated in the home from washing dishes, laundry and bathing. Gray water comprises 50-80% of residential wastewater. It's OK to use gray water (rinse water) to water ornamental garden plants. The key to using gray water is to apply it to the soil around the plants and not to the foliage. Black water is water contaminated by feces, urine and/or toxic chemicals and should never be used to water plants.

Be creative in conserving and recycling water.

- ◆ Keep a bucket near the shower, bathtub and kitchen sink to collect water while waiting for hot water to warm up.
- ◆ Collect & use water from dehumidifiers and air conditioners.
- ◆ Collect & use rinse water from washing dishes and clothes.
- ◆ Collect & use water from washing or cooking vegetables, pasta and fruit.
- ◆ Leftover black coffee and tea can be diluted with gray water and used to water plants.

Plant artwork from All-America Selections

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Drought Tolerant Annuals

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During periods of drought, gardens don't have to look barren. Gardeners concerned about Maryland's water deficit can still garden if they follow the water conservation tips listed here and wisely select garden plants that, once established, either don't need a lot of water or can tolerate the drought. Many perennials are drought tolerant. With careful searching, gardeners can find annuals that also fare well through dry periods.



Petunia 'Lavender Wave'

Listed* inside are some of those annuals that are known to either tolerate drought or thrive on very little water.

* This list was compiled from many sources, including personal experience, Iowa, Rutgers, Texas and Virginia Cooperative Extension Services and the American Horticultural Society's Encyclopedia of Gardening.

Note: All these plants should be watered well when planted. Once established, they will tolerate drought better than others. The plants with an asterisk * are particularly drought tolerant – some even thrive on drought.

List of Drought Tolerant Annuals

Common Name	Latin Name	Height/Width in inches	Flower Color	Comments
Ageratum	<i>Ageratum houstonianum</i>	6-12/6-12	white, purple, blue, lavender, pink	grows nicely in part shade
Annual or plains coreopsis	<i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i>	12-32/12	gold with mahogany center	great meadow flower
Blanket flower *	<i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	12-18/12	yellow, orange, with burgundy center	annual in zone 6, perennial in zone 7
Calendula, Pot marigold *	<i>Calendula officinalis</i>	9-20	yellow to orange	flower petals are edible
Celosia, Cockscomb	<i>Celosia argentea plumosa, C. cristatum</i>	12-30/10-30	cream, yellow, gold, pink, red	comes in plume and cockscomb forms
Coleus	<i>Coleus spp.</i>	16-36/16-36	blue to white	grown for its colorful leaves; recovers quickly after watering
Cosmos *	<i>Cosmos bipinnatus, C. sulphureus</i>	12-48/24-30	white, pink, magenta; yellow, gold, red	great for poor, dry soils
Creeping zinnia	<i>Sanvitalia procumbens</i>	4-8/6	yellow, orange, with brown center	prefers heat
Dahlberg daisy *	<i>Dyssodia tenuiloba</i>	4-8/15-18	yellow	flowers continuously, even during drought
Dusty Miller *	<i>Senecio cineraria</i>	8-16	gray foliage	recovers quickly after watering
Flowering tobacco	<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>	12-36/8-18	white, yellow, lime, red, lavender, pink	fragrant flowers; will wilt, but recovers after watering
Four o'clock	<i>Mirabilis jalapa</i>	12-36	Red, pink, yellow, white	roots & seeds can cause mild dermatitis
Gazania *	<i>Gazania rigens, G. longiscapa</i>	6-12	white, pink, yellow, orange, bronze, burgundy	some varieties have striped petals; flowers close at night
Globe amaranth, Bachelor's buttons	<i>Gomphrena globosa</i>	9-24/10-12	purple, pink, white, yellow, red	great for drying
Lantana	<i>Lantana camara, L. montevidensis</i>	24-48; 12	pink, yellow, orange; pink	multi-colored plant grows upright, pink flowered plant is trailing
Love lies bleeding, Amaranth	<i>Amaranthus spp.</i>	24-60/12-30	greenish white, red	does double duty as an edible crop
Marigold	<i>Tagetes erecta, T. patula</i>	6-12/8-18	yellow, orange, maroon	blooms all summer into mid-autumn
Melampodium	<i>Melampodium paludosum</i>	8-10	yellow	mounded plant full of little daisy-like flowers
Mexican or Moss rose *	<i>Portulaca grandiflora</i>	6-8	wide range of colors	one tough, yet colorful plant; reseeds itself
Mexican sunflower *	<i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i>	24-24/24	yellow, gold, orange, red	attracts butterflies, may need staking
Nasturtium	<i>Tropaeolum majus</i>	8-18/12-15	cream, gold, orange, red, mahogany, salmon	flowers & leaves are edible; recovers quickly after watering
Ornamental pepper	<i>Capsicum annum</i>	18-20/18-20	white	grown for edible fruit of yellow, orange, red, purple, near black
Pansy	<i>Viola x wittrockiana</i>	4-8/6	combinations of all colors	for fall & spring garden
Petunia *	<i>Petunia x hybrida</i>	8-12/12-24	all except orange with combinations & patterns	may need to be cut back & watered in mid-summer
Salvia	<i>Salvia splendens, S. farinacea</i>	8-18/8-18	red, cream, pink, blue, violet	larger varieties need less water than dwarfs
Snapdragon *	<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	8-36	all except blue, with combinations	recovers quickly after watering
Snow on the Mountain *	<i>Euphorbia marginata</i>	12-18/8	white, green	grown for its colorful leaves; milky sap can cause rash
Spider flower	<i>Cleome hasslerana</i>	28/8	white, pink, lavender	readily reseeds itself
Statice	<i>Limonium sinuatum</i>	24-30	yellow, rose, blue, lavender, white	great as a dried flower
Straw flower	<i>Helichrysum bracteatum</i>	14-36	yellow, gold, red, pink, white	great as a dried flower
Sunflower	<i>Helianthus annuus</i>	24-120	yellow, orange, red, burgundy	prefers lots of water for maximum growth but will tolerate drought
Sweet alyssum *	<i>Lobularia maritima</i>	3-4/12	white, cream, pink, rose, purple	growth stops during drought but resumes when watered
Verbena	<i>Verbena spp. and hybrids</i>	8-12/8-12	white, pink, red, blue, purple	great for edging, bedding, groundcover, containers
Vinca, Madagascar periwinkle	<i>Catharanthus roseus</i>	12-24/12-24	white, pink, lavender, salmon	dark green glossy foliage, flowers often have contrasting "eyes"
Wax begonia	<i>Begonia semperflorens-cultorum</i>	6-12/8	white, pink, red	adaptable in full sun or full shade
Zinnia	<i>Zinnia elegans, Z. angustifolia, Z. linearis</i>	6-36/6-30	white, yellow, gold, orange, burgundy, purple	great as a cut flower and is a good nectar source for butterflies

* particularly drought tolerant