

# Outdoor Water Use Tips

Avoid planting turf in areas that are hard to water such as steep inclines and isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways.

Plant during the spring or fall when the watering requirements are lower.

Check your water meter and bill to track your water usage.

Minimize evaporation by watering during the early morning hours, when temperatures are cooler and winds are lighter.

Use a layer of organic mulch around plants to reduce evaporation and save hundreds of gallons of water a year.

We're more likely to notice leaky faucets indoors, but don't forget to check outdoor faucets, pipes, and hoses for leaks.

Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. Longer grass shades root systems and holds soil moisture better than a closely clipped lawn.

Use porous materials for walkways and patios to keep water in your yard and prevent wasteful runoff.

Direct downspouts and other runoff towards shrubs and trees, or collect and use for your garden.

Reduce the amount of grass in your yard by planting shrubs and ground cover with a 3 inch layer of organic mulch.

Water your plants deeply but less frequently to create healthier, stronger roots.

Group plants with the same watering needs together to get the most out of your watering time.

Remember to weed your lawn and garden regularly. Weeds compete with other plants for nutrients, light, and water.

While fertilizers promote plant growth, they also increase water consumption. Apply the minimum amount of fertilizer needed.

More plants die from over-watering than from under-watering. Be sure only to water For hanging baskets, planters and pots, place ice cubes under the moss or dirt to give your plants a cool drink of water and help eliminate water overflow.

## **Rely on drought-resistant landscape plants**

Several Georgia landscape and greenhouse experts list more than 200 mainstream plants that, if you get them established properly, need precious little water in hot, dry conditions. Most of these plants are truly prolific bloomers. For example, lantana "New Gold" loves 100-degree heat and needs watering only once every two weeks to bloom solidly through the summer.

Native plants can take the heat, and they're adapted to drought. Hundreds of native flowers and flowering bulbs can brighten your garden. And many garden centers and nurseries carry natives. You can learn more about native plants and where to buy them from the Georgia Native Plant Society Web site at [www.gnps.org](http://www.gnps.org). Natives are the best way to responsibly landscape and garden without the extra effort.

Perennials for sun: Lantana 'Miss Huff,' Helianthus angustifolia, Salvia guaranitica, Salvia leucantha, Ruellia brittoniana, Rudbeckia triloba, Stachys byzantina, Artemisia "Silver King" and Kniphofia uvaria.

Perennials for shade: Helebor hybrids, Japanese autumn ferns, Aspidistra eliator, Monarda didyma (it wilts but comes back), Iris reticulata, Sedum 'Autumn Joy', Iris siberica and Hosta hybrids.

Annuals: Lantana camara hybrids, Catharanthus roseus, Amaranthus caudatus, Celosia cristata, Portulaca hybrids, Melampodium paludosum, Petunias (especially old-timey and "Wave" petunias), Passiflora 'Byron's Beauty', Cosmos bipinnatus, Cosmos sulfureus, Tithonia rotundifolia, Verbena tenuisecta, Salvia farinaceae hybrids and Zinnia elegans.

Perennial natives: Lilium hybrids, Amsonia tabernaemontana, Daucus carota, Physostegia virginiana, Lonicera sempervirens, Achillea millifolium, Clematis paniculata, Oenothera speciosa, Bellamcanda chinensis, Boltonia asteroides, asters (native species), Echinaceae purpurea, Tradescantia virginiana, Eupatorium coelestinum, Eupatorium fistulosum, Asclepias tuberosa and Bignonia capreolata.

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