

Hot tips for surviving the long hot summer



Great Gardens

The straight away things...

1. Check your irrigation... make sure sprinklers are

not being blocked by growth, sand or lawn clippings.

Make sure they are not pointing on roads, paths etc.

Replace 'mistlers' with subsurface or trickle irrigation

Replace normal spray 'pop ups' with MP Rotators.

Potential water savings: 10-60%

2. Only water when your plants need it...

Do the old 'finger test' and check for soil moisture levels before automatically putting on the irrigation. As a hint if you have lush growth, need to mow once a week or have clover or sedge in your lawn in summer you ARE watering too much. Remember lush growth is weak

growth. Potential water savings: 10-20%

3. Use wetting agents and use them effectively...

Make sure they are good quality and make sure they 'froth' when wetted and make sure the next watering goes straight in, if not you should reapply. Potential water Savings: 10-30%

4. Mulch, mulch, mulch!

Put this on 5-10cm thick and use only the best - ie pine bark, street tree prunings or stone and gravel for most of the garden. You can use pea straw or lucerne hay for veggies, potted colour and fruit trees but to protect it this will need a good covering with the rough course mulch in summer.

Potential water savings: 20-60%

5. Shade, move or screen...

any thirsty plants, give them shading or move them to the south or south east side of the house in summer and autumn. Potential water savings: 10-20%

6. Shade, screen and or plant paved areas and walls...

Shade sails, verandahs, awnings, plantings can all help keep you, your house and your garden cooler and happier in the drought.

Potential water savings: 10-20%

7. Use your grey water...

Even a bucket in the shower will give you at least 4-8000 litres of water a year for a 2-4 person family. Consider a diverter hose (very cheap) or a specially designed system. With tough water efficiency measures expected this summer Grey water may well be your best investment for your beloved garden.

Potential water savings: 10-40%

And planning for a Waterwise future...

1. Chose appropriate waterwise plants...

Link your choices back to your soil AND climate this make a **HUGE** difference. Get help through www.greatgardens.info or visit the Water Corporation website at www.watercorporation.com.au and follow the links to Waterwise Plants for Perth.

Potential water savings: 20-60%

2. Prepare the soil...

Add organic matter (compost/ potting mix/manure or soil conditioner), plus wetting agents, soil amendments (eg zeolites, spongelites or bentonite clay for sand), gypsum (for clay) as well as some slow release fertiliser. This will give your plants a great boost to get them started and will stop water and nutrients from leaking into our waterways.

Potential water savings: 10-30%

3. Plant into a depression...

This is especially valuable in sands to 'harvest' water from rain and or sprinklers and direct it towards your plants roots.

Potential water savings: 10-15%

4. Plant in 'Hydrozones' and dense plantings...

Group your plants according to their watering needs. **One Drop Plants:** the toughest plants should dominate the garden. **Two Drop Plants:** need 1-2 waterings a week over summer, should be placed on the south or east side of the house. **Three Drop Plants:** certified 'water guzzlers' minimize these and place only on the south and east side of the house and or in pots.

Potential water savings: 10-30%

5. Mulch, mulch, mulch!!!

Mulch should be one of the key features of your garden...NEVER leave your soil bare and exposed! Free mulch available through

www.mulchnet.com

Potential water savings: 30-60%

6. Don't overfertilise...

Over fertilising is not only wasteful causing pollution to our waterways but it also encourages lush growth that becomes a beacon for pests and disease and will set you on the treadmill of an ongoing requirement to intensively 'manage' and water your plants.

Potential water savings: 10-20%

7. Plant in Autumn for sand - gravels...

Follow nature's cue and give your plants the best chance of getting off to a great start by planting early in the growing season.

Potential water savings: 10-20%

8. Screen your property...

Aim to plant across your eastern boundary to help stave off the worst effects of the wretched summer easterlies..

Potential water savings: 10-15%

9. Choose only the best quality stock...

Don't compromise when it comes to getting your plants - only the best will do. Your best guarantee is to only buy 'Waterwise' plants and to get them from accredited nurseries.

Potential water savings: 10-20%

10. Put your 'water guzzlers' in moveable pots...

Seal your pots, use saucers and move them to the south and south east of your house in the summer and autumn. Add water crystals to all potting mixes.

Potential water savings: 10-20%

11. Consider putting in sub surface and grey water systems...

Without doubt this is one of the single most important things you can do to save and re-use water. Get the designs right and you will have an excellent systems perfectly designed for our tough climate. Water Corporation rebates apply. Potential water savings: 10-40%

12. Reduce your lawn...

Consider alternatives such as ground covers, pavers, stone and chipped mulches. If new lawn is being installed consider a warm season grass such as a 'soft leaf buffalo' and make sure you prepare the soil well.

Potential water savings: 20-50%

13. Renovate the lawn you keep...

Aerate, 'core' or Verti mow lawns every 1-2 years, cover with 'Lawn Reviver' or a thin layer of compost or sand, apply wetting agents 2-3 times a year. Don't mow lower than 5-7cm.

Potential water savings: 10-20%

14. Don't prune, over fertilise or over water stressed plants...

Tempting as it is most stressed plants will not magically respond to this treatment and often such actions will kill them off completely.

Instead provide irregular deep waterings over summer and delay fertiliser use to late autumn and winter.

Potential water savings: 5-10%

Remember Waterwise plants as part of a well designed and Healthy Garden are your best defence against the rigours of drought!