

Help your lawn survive the dog days of summer

Homeowners who love their lawns often dread the arrival of summer. High temperatures and endless hours of sun can take their toll on a lawn, especially if a drought occurs and water restrictions are put in place.

For homeowners who don't want to sacrifice their lawns to summer heat waves, there are a few watering strategies that can help the lawn withstand the harsh and unrelenting dog days of summer.

- Water before the temperatures peak. It might seem like your lawn needs watering most when the temperature is at its highest, but that's not really the case. Water attracts the sun, so homeowners who water their lawns when temperatures peak are likely to burn the lawn. Watering is best done when the temperatures are at their coolest, such as in early

morning or during the twilight hours in the evening. Watering during these hours also ensures the water won't evaporate as quickly, allowing the lawn to retain more water.

- One size does not fit all. A typical landscape has a lawn and likely a handful of trees and shrubs. Homeowners should know that each of these different plants needs different amounts of water. Deep-rooted plants, which includes trees and shrubs, don't need to be watered as frequently, but homeowners should spend more time watering them when the time comes. Shallow-rooted plants, however, will need to be watered more frequently but for much shorter intervals. Homeowners



who aren't sure just how much time to spend watering the plants around their property should consult a local landscaper or gardening center for advice.

- Don't forget to mulch. Mulch is beneficial in many ways, one of which is due to its ability to retain moisture. Because mulch can effectively retain moisture even on hot summer days, this can reduce a homeowner's need to water, which can be especially valuable if a water restriction has been put into effect.

- Carefully place and time sprinklers. Sprinkler placement is important during the summer months, especially for homeowners who live in areas where water restrictions are common.

Strategically locate sprinklers so no water is being wasted on sidewalks and driveways. In addition, if the forecast calls for rain, turn the sprinklers off and let nature do the work for you.

- Give problem areas special attention. During the hot days of summer, nearly every lawn will have one or two

areas that are suffering more than the rest of the lawn. These areas might be entirely devoid of shade and, as a result, are quicker to succumb to summer heat. Water such areas by hand to ensure they're getting enough water to help them avoid turning brown or yellow.

Getting your lawn through a stretch of summer heat won't always be easy, but a few strategies can help the lawn withstand even the harshest heat wave.



The seven easiest vegetables to grow at home

Rising costs at the supermarket and worries about unhealthy pesticides or preservatives on foods has led many people to start a vegetable garden at home.

Growing vegetables is easier than one would think. Plus, you don't need an expansive plot of land to grow a garden. Many popular varieties can be grown right in containers or in compact spaces.

Perhaps you're wondering what vegetables are the easiest to grow if this is your first attempt at a food-based garden. There are several to try.

Tomatoes

While commonly considered vegetables, tomatoes are actually fruits. But tomatoes can be an integral part of a vegetable garden. Tomatoes are high in lycopene and other antioxidants. There are also myriad varieties to tempt your palate. Tomatoes can be planted after the soil has thawed and there is no other chance for frost. They'll

require plenty of sunlight. Fruit will be available to harvest toward the latter part of the summer.

Zucchini

Zucchini are an Italian squash variety that appear similar to a cucumber. They can be green or yellow in coloring. This vegetable is full of potassium, folate and manganese, making it a great addition to your menu. Zucchini take about a month to mature and be ready to harvest. They grow on vines and produce large flowers before bearing fruit.

Beets

Root vegetables like beets and radishes work well in the garden as well. The bright purple color of beets indicates they are full of many essential vitamins and minerals. Toss beets in salads or use them in the traditional soup, borscht.

Carrots

Another subterranean-growing veggie, carrots require moist soil as they germinate, but as the plants mature need less

water. Carrots can be enjoyed in a number of ways and are a staple of cooking year-round.

Peas

Peas grow inside the pods of legumes. These plants like moist soil that drains well. Water frequently but make sure the soil doesn't become flooded if you want peas to flourish.

Peppers

Peppers come in so many varieties it's easy to find ones that appeal to your taste in cooking. Generally peppers thrive in soil high in magnesium. Using compost and Epsom salt in the soil can help achieve the environment peppers desire.

Lettuce

Lettuce is another staple and the basis for many salad dishes. Lettuce also tops sandwiches and can be filled and wrapped for other recipe ideas. Seeds should be planted between 8 and 16 inches apart. Water in the morning instead of at night to prevent disease from developing.

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