

Organic, All Natural, and Earth-Friendly

P U B L I X

FREE  
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# Greenwise

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# create a water-less garden

TRIM YOUR WATER BILLS WITH THESE EXPERT TIPS FOR A HEALTHY, ECO-FRIENDLY YARD.



## MANAGE YOUR TURF

- **Limit lawns to 1 inch of water per week.** Irrigate in one or two thorough waterings to create a drought-resistant root system, explains Pamela Crawford, coauthor of *Easy Gardens for the South* (Color Garden Publishing, 2009).
- **Raise your mower** to optimum height for your type of grass. Taller

grass reduces soil moisture loss and shades out lawn weeds. Check with your local extension service for the best setting. (Visit [nifa.usda.gov/extension](http://nifa.usda.gov/extension) to find your local office.)

- **Apply the minimum amount of fertilizer** recommended to slow growth and reduce water needs. Leave clippings on the lawn to let nutrients recycle.

## USE MULCH

- **Mulch flowers, shrubs and trees** to help retain soil moisture and reduce the need to water. A 2–4 inch layer cuts water evaporation loss by 10 to 25 percent, according to North Carolina State University experts.

- **Choose natural mulches**, such as cocoa shells or pine straw, which decompose over time and enrich the soil with organic matter.
- **Prevent disease** by keeping mulch 2 inches away from tree and shrub trunks, advises Beth Babbit, horti-

culture specialist at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Otherwise, damp bark might breed bacteria.

- **Block weeds** with woven mulch fabric, which reduces moisture loss while allowing air and rain to reach the roots.

## PICK THE RIGHT PLANTS

- **Group thirsty plants in clusters** so you can target heavy watering, advises Babbit.
- **Choose drought-tolerant plants**, such as lantana and crepe myrtle,

which thrive with little water and will look great even when Mother Nature turns off the faucet.

- **Reduce lawn area.** Replace a portion of water-hungry grass with gravel, paving or deep-rooted trees and shrubs that don't need frequent sprinkling.

## WATER WISELY

- **Limit overhead watering.** "Water may stay on the foliage and cause fungus to grow," explains Crawford.
- **Use rain barrels.** "You'll be amazed at the amount of water you'll collect," Babbit says.

- **Sprinkle early.** Water early in the day when cooler temperatures reduce water loss from evaporation.
- **Install drip irrigation** to deliver water directly to the roots of trees and shrubs. These easy DIY systems use up to 50 percent less water than conventional sprinkler systems. 🌱

## DROUGHT DIVAS

Examples of plants and flowers that thrive in most parts of the South:

**trees** • Arizona cypress • Eastern redcedar • Hackberry • Kentucky coffeetree  
**flowers/grasses** • Black-eyed Susan • Cosmos • Hosta • Pampas grass  
**shrubs** • Camellia • Firebush • Juniper • Sweetshrub

For a comprehensive guide to drought-tolerant plants created by the University of Florida, visit [hendry.ifas.ufl.edu/drought-tolerant-plants.PDF](http://hendry.ifas.ufl.edu/drought-tolerant-plants.PDF)