Dealing with Drought

Water restrictions may be a way of life for some time, yet, this does not mean our landscapes must evolve into gravel and cactus. It is time to take a new look at how we prepare and maintain our landscapes making them more resilient, more WaterSmart.

- **Use compost** to improve soil’s water holding capacity and to help keep more of the water we get from rainfall or irrigation. As it breaks down, compost improves soil health making it easier for plants to survive stressful conditions like drought and disease.

- **Top dress** with compost. Beneficial microbes and microorganisms found in compost help to break up compacted soils allowing water to penetrate.

- **Water less often** but deeply forcing roots to grow deeper in search of water and keeping them from staying near the surface where the dry out quickly.

- **Choose plants** that suit our climate and the spot in which they are planted. **Native plants** and non-invasive adapted **WaterSmart** plants are well adapted to our periods of drought and flood.

- **Group plants** by water needs.

- **Water early** in the morning or after sunset when less water is lost to evaporation and when winds are generally calmer.

- **Train plants** to require less water by slowly backing off the amount you currently use. Most established plants and turf grass can get by on one inch of water once or twice per week.

- **Set mower** at the highest setting and lengthen time between cuttings. The longer blades help shade soil. Lawns cut shorter require more water.

- **Hold off** fertilizing your lawn until late fall and only if there is substantial rainfall.

- **Add mulch** to a depth of 2-3 inches to conserve moisture, reduce soil compaction and keep plant roots at a more even temperature.

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