

# Tips and tricks to save water during a hot summer

**KYM POKORNY**

OSU Extension

CORVALLIS - As the heat ratchets up so does water use, costing homeowners money and doing no favors for the environment.

Homeowners can learn to save water and money, however, with help from Oregon WaterWise Gardening, a statewide program of the Oregon State University Extension Service. Its website includes profiles of water-efficient plants.

Amy Jo Detweiler, a horticulturist with OSU Extension, compiled the following tips to help you conserve water and save on summer water bills:

When you're selecting new plants, look for

plants that use less water such as native globe mallow, black-eyed Susan, sedums, blanket flower, lavender and coneflower. Once established, these plants require minimal irrigation. Group plants together based on their water use for maximum water conservation.

If you like colorful bedding annuals such as zinnias, marigolds, impatiens and petunias, consider putting them in pots or hanging baskets where you can provide water directly, rather than watering the entire garden.

Closely manage your watering. Hand watering and automatic irrigation can be adequate if you are an efficient water

manager. Monitor how much water is used and adjust it throughout the season for warmer and cooler periods. Water in morning or late evening to mitigate evaporation.

If using automatic irrigation, consider drip emitters in clay type soils and microsprays in sandy soils. Be sure to provide adequate moisture to the entire root zone of the plant.

Soaker hoses are an alternative. Hook them to an automatic timer so you don't forget to turn off the water. This works for vegetable and ornamental gardens.

In western Oregon you can let your lawn go dormant for the summer. It will green up when

winter rains begin.

In central and eastern Oregon, select more drought-resistant types of turf grass such as tall fescue or blended mixes and place turf only where needed. You will need to continue watering throughout the summer to prevent your lawn from dying.

You can find profiles and pictures of water-efficient plants for Oregon's high desert in a 56-page publication authored by Detweiler, much of which is relevant in other areas of Oregon. Also available are *Conserving Water in the Garden*, and three infographics: *Keys to Water-efficient Landscapes*, *It Pays to Water Wisely* and *Landscape*

*Maintenance to Conserve Water*.

For all of your landscape plants, encourage deep rooted plants by watering deeper less often. You can look for clues to water stress, such as slight wilting or a dull, transparent look of the leaves and adjust your watering accordingly.

When you plant new shrubs and trees, provide a long soak from a hose to saturate the soil deeply in the immediate area. You should repeat this process several times, especially during dry periods, to give your new shrubs and trees the resources to grow strong and deep roots that will require less water in the future.