

DROUGHT RESISTANT GARDENING

By

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of

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For the enthusiastic gardeners amongst us, the hosepipe ban currently affecting an ever-increasing number of regions across the South of England is more than an inconvenience it's a potential disaster.

But do not despair. With a little thought and reorganisation, you can conserve water, minimise drought damage and still ensure you have a summer garden that's the envy of all your neighbours!

How? It's simple.....

1. **Improve Moisture Retention in the Soil**

Limit evaporation from the soil by mulching soil surfaces. This will significantly improve moisture retention. There are several different types of mulch which can be employed for this purpose:-

a. **Organic Mulches**

The best organic matter to use would be -

- (i) **Animal Manure** making sure that it is well rotted.
- (ii) **Mushroom Compost** though this should not be used on very chalky soil or acid loving plants.
- (iii) **Garden Compost** when the texture has turned 'crumbly'.
- (iv) **Leaf Mould** this compost will suit acid loving plants (recycling garden waste into compost makes one of the cheapest soil conditioners).
- (v) **Chipped Bark** make sure you buy chipped bark, not chipped wood. But be careful: when dry and in a strong wind, it tends to blow about the garden!

b. **Non Organic Mulches**

- (i) **Gravel or other Aggregates** excellent, long lasting inorganic mulch available in a range of colours, textures and sizes

- (ii) **Grass cuttings** compost with other material first (never compost grass cuttings that have been freshly treated with herbicide).
- (iii) **Cocoa shells** a good, light, porous mulch with small amounts of nutrients
- (iv) **Rocks, Pebbles & Glass Nuggets** are a colourful, efficient alternative to all of the above.

When using an inorganic matter as mulch on the soil, first prepare the site by pegging down a porous membrane on top of the soil. The weight of the inorganic mulch will help anchor the membrane and prevent the gravel or glass nuggets from becoming buried in the soil.

2. **Water Butts**

Place water butts in the garden in strategic spots where they can catch water from the roof of your home, garage and garden outbuildings. Water butts can be inter-linked using hosepipe to allow the maximum amount of water to be stored.

Call Original Organics for under half price Water Butts including a down-pipe connector and a watering can on tel. 01884 841515

3. **Recycle Domestic Water.**

Do not use water though that contains bleach or detergent. Bath water can be used so long as you rotate the type of water given in one area. Make sure that the water is not poured directly on to the leaves.

4. **Lay a Drought Tolerant Lawn**

Grassed areas are the first to suffer from a hosepipe ban. Consider reducing the size of your lawn and possibly replacing it with a Gravel Bed or a lawn made up of thyme or camomile. Alternatively, you could consider hard landscaping.

However, if you're set on keeping your lawn, a turf company in the South of England called Sovereign has developed a **Drought Tolerant Grass called 'Xeris'** details of which can be found on my website www.garden-designer.co.uk

5. **The Hard Landscaping Option**

There are a variety of surfaces other than lawn that offer interest and texture in the garden. These include:-

- (a) **Paving** Leaving a space between the paving stones for creeping plants such as thyme can soften the edges of a hard-paved area. Even in dry weather there is usually sufficient moisture beneath the slabs for the efficient growth of alpines. Leaving out the occasional slab can also provide space for a larger plant to be grown.
- (b) **Cobbles and Aggregates** naturally complement each other as well as do plants and can be easily worked into curving shapes and organic patterns. For added colour contrast, glass blocks can also be introduced in small areas.
- (c) **Gravel** This is by far the easiest surface to lay, although it is better not to lay gravel immediately next to the house, as it is easily trodden indoors.
- (d) **Decking** can easily be accommodated in any garden regardless of levels. Using grooved timber helps to prevent slipping when the surface is wet.

Combining the above in an imaginative way will not only enable you to conserve water, but will also provide an area of garden that needs little maintenance. It will also create a cool area where plants will thrive during spells of dry weather.

For more information about any of the above contact Amanda

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6. **Planting**

There are a number of ways in which planting itself can help reduce the amount of water evaporation from the soil:-

- (a) **Plant more trees** - Shade from trees helps to provide cooler pockets of air, whilst the trees themselves create an excellent windbreak to minimise the drying effect of the wind. If your garden occupies a large, windy site, especially near the coast, you could benefit from planting a high hedge or a 'shelter belt' of trees and shrubs. For more advice about this kind of planting contact me by email amanda@garden-designer.co.uk or give me a call on 01903 859757
- (b) **Grow Plants in Containers** If you grow a lot of patio plants in containers, grouping them together will enable them to produce their own microclimate. It will also help conserve water, as more is required to water more widely spaced

plants. Water-retaining granules incorporated in the compost of hanging Baskets and containers will also help keep the soil moist during dryer weather.

- (c) **Plant Ground Cover** The use of ground cover planting is another very useful way of helping to retain moisture in the soil. Plants with silver coloured foliage are especially effective in achieving this.

The art of good ground cover planting lies in creating drifts of plants, broken by the occasional change of height, shape and colour.

- (d) **Use Windbreaks** It is not only trees and shrubs that can be useful in slowing down the wind and reducing moisture loss in the garden. More immediate remedies are things like woven willow panels, trellising and baffle fencing, all of which provide instant, effective help in combating the drying process when erected in the right places.

For long term windbreaks, evergreen hedges such as holly or deciduous hedges such as hawthorn are an excellent choice.

- (e) **Terracing** In sloping gardens, water quickly drains away, leaving slim opportunity for the soil to absorb any moisture. Terracing provides a flat surface to help contain and conserve water supplies. Terracing can be constructed in various ways, one of which is to use sleepers. For more advice on this topic contact me www.garden-designer.co.uk or phone 01903 859757

PLANTS SUITABLE FOR DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Flowering Plants

Achillea millefolium 'Sammetriese'
Allium cristophii
Anthemis
Asclepias tuberosa
Asphodeline lutea
Dictamnus albus
Echinacea purpura 'Robert Bloom'
Echniops rito
Euphorbia griffithii
Gaillardia

Gypsophila repens
Helictotrichon sempervirens
Lychnis flos-jovis
Nepeta x faassenii
Origanum laevigatum
Phlomis russeliana
Salvia sclarea
Sedum
Verbascum

Grasses

Cortaderia selloana
Elymus magellanicus
Eragrostis curvula
Melica altissima
Stipa arundinacea

Foliage that can withstand Drought

Eryngium maritimum – seashore dweller
Eucalyptus perriniana -Tree
Festuca ovina - grass
Pinus thunbergii – conifer
Portulaca oleracea - succulent
Sedum spathulifolium Purpureum - succulent
Sempervivum ciliosum - rock plant
Senecio cineraria Cirrus –bedding

Plants for Dry Shade

Perennials
Bergenia
Brunnera
Cortaderia selloana
Epimedium
Lamium
Pachysandra
Pulmonia
Waldsteinia

Bulbs and Corms

Allium
Anemone blanda
Cyclamen
Eranthis hyemalis

Shrubs

Cotoneaster horizontalis
Euonymus Hedera
Ilex

Prunus laurocerasus
Ribes
Rucus Santolina
Symphoricarpus
Vinca Minor - a good ground cover

Good Plants for Coastal Sites

Flowering Perennials

Armeria
Cortaderia
Crambe
Eryngium
Kniphofia
Limonium
Oenothera

Flowering Shrubs

Cistus
Cytisus
Fuchsias
Genista
Halimocistus
Hebes
Hydrangeas
Olearia
Romneya coulteri
Rosemary
Spartium

Seaside Hedging Plants

Crataegus
Elaeagnus
Escallonia
Fuschia Riccartoni
Griselinia littoralis
Hippophae rhamnoides
Ilex
Leyland cypress
Olearia x hasstii
Pyracantha
Rosa rugosa
Tamarix
Ulex

Plants for the Container Garden

Some of these plants will need winter protection

Agapanthus Blue Moon
Aloe ferox
Brachyscome iberidifolia
Convolvulus cneorum
Cordyline Purple Tower
Cotoneaster horizontalis
Dimorphotheca pluvialis
Festuca glauca
Gazania
Halimium Susan
Hebe Red Edge
Helichrysum petiolare
Lampranthus haworthii
Lavender
Lotus hirsutus
Nerium oleander
Opuntia robusta
Origanums
Pennisetum alopecuroides
Phlomis fruticosa
Phormium tenax
Portulaca grandiflora
Rosemary
Salvia sclarea
Saponaria
Sedum Ruby Glow
Sempervivum guiseppi
Sempervivum montanum
Thymes
Yucca filamentosa

Good Plants for Dry Places

The following can cope with lack of water in full sun but a few like shade.
Take care, some tender plants from hot climates will need protection from damp northerly winters.

Trees

Acacia dealabata – Mimosa
Arbutus – Strawberry tree
Cedrus - Cedar
Cordyline australis
Crataegus – Hawthorn
Cupressus – Cypress
Eucalytus – Gum tree
Ilex aquifolium – Holly
Koelreuteria paniculata – Golden Rain tree

Ligustrum lucidum – Chinese Privet
Parkinsonia aculeate – Jerusalem thorn
Pinus – Pine
Quercus – Oak
Rhus typhina Stags horn sumach
Robinia pseuacacia

Shrubs and Climbers

Artemisia
Atriplexhalimus
Ballota pseudodictamnus
Bougainvillea glabra
Caragana arborescens – Pea tree
Cistus- sun rose
Convolvulous cneorum
Cotoneaster
Cytisus – Broom
Elaegnus
Eriogonum
Escallonia
Euonymous
Euphorbia characias
Fremontodendron
Genista –
Griselinia littoralis
Halimium
Hebe
Hedera – Ivy
Helianthmum – Rock Rose
Hippophae rhamnoides
Hydrangea paniculata
Hypericum calycinum
Hyssopus officinalis
Juniperus
Lantana
Lavendula
Lavatera
Lonicera periclymenum
Lotus hirsutus
Nerium oleander
Olearia
Opuntia robusta - Prickly Pear Cactus
Parahebe catarractae
Pervoskia
Phlomis
Prunus laurocerasus – Cherry Laurel
Romneya coulteri – tree Poppy
Rosa – Rose
Rosemary

Ruta graveolens – Rue
Santolina – Cotton Lavender
Spartium junceum – Spanish broom
Tamarix - Tamarisk
Teucrium fruticans
Ulex europaeus – Gorse
Yucca

Perennials and Bulbs

Drought resistant perennials seldom produce the same luxuriant growth of an traditional herbaceous border. Some will need to be over wintered in a green house or conservatory

Acanthus
Achillea
Agapanthus
Agave
Allium
Aloe
Anthemis
Artemisia
Asclepias tuberosa – Butterfly weed
Asphodeline lutea – Yellow asphodel
Calamintha nepeta
Crambe
Dictamnus albus – Burning Bush
Echinacea Purpurea
Echinops – Globe Thistle
Epimedium
Eryngium – Sea Holly
Erysimum – Wall Flowers
Euphorbia – Spurge
Gaillardia
Gazania
Helichrysum
Iris
Kniphofia- Red hotpokers
Lamium
Lampranthus
Limonium platyphyllum – Sea lavender
Lychnis
Nepeta - Catmint
Oenothera – Evening Primrose
Pachysandra terminalis
Phlomis russeliana
Phormium
Salvia
Saponaria
Sedum
Stachys
Tulipa

Verbascum
Verbena bonariensis

Ornamental Grasses

Not all grasses are drought tolerant a few like it damp but these below suit dry conditions.

Briza –Quaking Grass
Cortaderia sellonana – Pampas Grass
Elymus hispidus – Blue Wheat grass
Eragrostis curvula – Love Grass
Festuca
Helictotrichon sempervirens – Blue oat grass
Holcus mollis Albovariegatus
Koeleria glauca
Leymus arenarius – Lyme grass
Melica altissima
Pennisetum – Fountain grass
Schizachyrium scoparium – Little Blue stem
Stipa

Rock Plants

Acaena
Alyssum
Antennaria dioica
Arabis
Armeria – Sea Pink or Thrift
Aubretia
Cerastium tomentosum – Snow in Summer
Gypsophila repens
Origanum
Phlox subulata
Rhodanthemum hosmariense
Sedum
Sempervirens – HouseLeek
Thymus – Thyme

Annual and Biennials

Argemone - Prickly Poppy
Brachyscome iberidifolia
Calendula Officinalis – Marigold
Cosmos bipinnatus
Dimorphotheca pluvialis
Eschscholzia California- California Poppy
Lavatera trimestris – Mallow
Linaria maroccana – Toadflax
Linum grandiflorum – Flowering Flax
Onopordum acanthium

Papaver – Poppy
Portulaca grandiflora
Salvia sclarea
Senecio cineraria
Silene coeli-rosa - Rose of Heaven