



### **Bee-Waterwise Tips for Amarillo – Summer 2011**

The **Amarillo Botanical Gardens** would like to offer some practical suggestions for watering responsibly around your home. These suggestions are for those who choose to maintain a beautiful home landscape during our serious drought conditions.

These recommendations come at a crisis time in our community as our water resources are rapidly diminishing and our heat, lack of rain and increased winds are setting unprecedented records. Additionally, Lake Meredith is no longer a reliable source of water for our Panhandle communities. We must conserve the finite groundwater that we have.

Every garden and landscape is unique and conditions vary dramatically. Customize your watering to your garden situation. The ultimate goal however should remain efficient use of water in the landscape. “**Beeing Waterwise**” benefits all!

The ABG would like to share these strategies for minimal water use for maximum positive effect.

1. If possible, water only at night or early morning when evaporation and wind is minimal.
2. Thirsty plants prefer infrequent deep soakings as opposed to frequent light waterings.
3. Use mulch around your plants to retain moisture. The city offers free mulch at four locations.
4. Utilize xeric and native plants as they naturally look beautiful with less water.
5. Catch rain water in a barrel or cistern for watering house plants or for use in the garden. Plants like this water better than tap water anyway.
6. Place accent rocks in the garden for soil moisture retention, wind and shade protection.
7. Get acquainted with your sprinkler system’s control panel (if you have one). Set it responsibly. Maintain your sprinkler heads and don’t spray the sidewalk or street. Know how much water your sprinkler system delivers, don’t water daily and turn it off altogether after or during a rain or snowfall.
8. For hot spots that need some additional moisture, hand water the needed area rather than running the sprinkler system.
9. Place high water-use plants in containers and hand water them as needed.
10. Consider removing your high water-use grass (such as Fescue or Bluegrass) and replacing with low water grasses such as Bermuda or better yet, Buffalograss. Whatever your grass variety, mow with a mulching mower, set high (2-3 inches) so the grass can shade itself. This will also encourage deeper root systems.

11. Pull weeds as they compete for limited water. Mulching helps minimize weeds too.
12. For those without automatic sprinkler systems, use inexpensive timers connected to faucets to avoid wasting water.

Several great sources of responsible gardening information in this difficult climate are:

[www. highplainsgardening.com](http://www.highplainsgardening.com)

[www. amarillobotanicalgardens.org](http://www.amarillobotanicalgardens.org)

<http://water.amarillo.gov/index.php>

If you have specific gardening questions about saving water or any other gardening information call the Randall County Master Gardeners, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings, 9:00am to noon at 806 468-5543

