

Stay safe when gardening in hot weather

Gardening is widely considered as relaxing a hobby as it is rewarding. Although gardening when temperatures are mild, such as in spring and fall, can be relaxing, gardening can be much

more physically taxing and even dangerous when temperatures rise during the dog days of summer.

Gardens need tending even when temperatures outside are especially

hot, so gardeners must take steps to protect their health when working in their gardens during the summer.

- Stay hydrated. Staying hydrated by drinking plenty of water is some-

thing gardeners must do to stay safe when gardening in summer. Water carries heat away from internal organs, helping to prevent heat stroke along the way. Water takes heat through the bloodstream to the skin, resulting in sweat. Gardeners who notice they are not sweating despite the heat should drink more water and even head indoors to cool down. In addition, the American Heart Association notes that keeping the body hydrated helps the heart pump blood more easily, making gardening less taxing on the heart on hot days.

- Take frequent breaks indoors or in shady areas. Limit marathon gardening sessions to spring and fall when the weather permits. When gardening in harsh summertime heat, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention advises gardeners to take frequent breaks. Head inside to air conditioned rooms, if necessary, or find shady areas to sit, relax and drink some water. Sitting in the shade will give the body's thermostat a chance to recover from exposure to extreme heat.

· Take note of your physical condition. Many people garden alone, so it's important that gardeners learn the symptoms of heat-related illnesses. The CDC notes that elevated body temperatures, headache, rapid pulse, dizziness, nausea, and/or confusion are some common symptoms of heat-related illnesses. Gardeners should go indoors the moment any such symptoms ap-

pear.

· Garden during the cooler parts of the day. Lawn care professionals advise against watering lawns between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the summertime, as water is more likely to evaporate during this time, which tends to be the hottest time of the day. Gardeners should avoid working in their gardens during these hours as well. Garden in the early morning hours when the sun is not burning as hot or in late afternoon or early evening hours when temperatures are less threatening.

Gardening in summer requires gardeners to exercise caution and assess their physical conditions routinely and honestly.



Gardeners must exercise caution when tending to their gardens during the dog days of summer.

How to conserve water at home

Conservation is an essential component of an eco-friendly lifestyle. Conserving the planet's natural resources can have a profound impact on the planet, and conserving at home is a great way for men and women to get the ball rolling on their conservation efforts.

One of the most effective ways to conserve at home is to reduce water consumption. Few people give much thought to how much water they consume at home, as water bills tend to be considerably lower than other utilities like energy and phone. But even if efforts to conserve water at home may not make a dramatic impact on monthly utility bills, the following measures can go a long way toward preserving one of the planet's most precious resources.

• **Fix leaky faucets.** Leaky faucets in a home might not seem like they waste much water each day. However, the U.S. Geological Survey estimates that a single home with three leaky faucets that each pro-

duce one drip per minute will waste 104 gallons of water per year from these faucets alone. This waste is easily prevented by simply fixing leaky faucets the moment drips are noticed.

• **Wash your car at a commercial car wash.** Some vehicle owners may enjoy washing their cars at home in their driveways. But getting a car washed at a professional car wash can conserve substantial amounts of water. That's because many new car wash facilities employ water reclamation systems that reuse water. According to San Diego Car Care, a professional car wash that employs water reclamation technology, each car washed at their facility consumes just nine to 15 gallons of water per wash. That's a considerable savings compared to washing at home, as the State of Maryland's Department of the Environment estimates that 100 gallons of water are consumed during a single 10-minute car wash at home using a garden hose.

• **Install shower heads that earned the WaterSense label.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says that showering accounts for nearly 17 percent of home water consumption. For the average family, that translates to almost 1.2 trillion gallons of water each year. Shower heads that have earned the EPA's WaterSense label have met various conservation criteria established by the EPA. Such shower heads are 20 percent more efficient than the average product that does not have the label. According to the EPA, the average family can save 2,900 gallons of water per year by installing shower heads that have earned the WaterSense label.

• **Use a dishwasher.** This particular effort to conserve water is one that everyone can embrace. According to the GRACE Communications Foundation, an organization devoted to developing innovative strategies to increase public awareness about the issues facing our

environment, using an energy-efficient dishwasher instead of hand-washing dishes can save as much as 15.5 gallons per wash.

Conserving water at home can have a profound impact on the environment. And efforts at conservation are often simpler than many people may think.



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