



## Extreme Heat Can Sizzle Landscapes

Water restrictions aren't the only threat to green Georgia lawns. The searing summer heat is scorching landscapes across the state.

If your landscape plants are taking a beating from the heat, they'll send out signals. University of Georgia horticulturists say the hydrangeas and impatiens in your flower beds are the poster plants for heat and drought stress. If they look droopy, take this as a sign that all your plants need water.

If your annuals and perennials continue to be heat stressed, UGA experts say cut them back about halfway. If they are wilting badly, cutting them back will help them survive.

Reducing the plant's top will place less demand on its roots. The plant will come back in a few weeks and bloom again in the fall.

The same strategy works for woody ornamentals like gardenias or hydrangeas. They should be cut back to half or a third of their normal size.

When summer weather brings dry weather and heat for more than 20 days, homeowners have to make life-saving, or losing, landscape decisions. UGA horticulturists suggest basing your decisions on replacement value. Select your most valuable trees or shrubs, and water them. Herbaceous plants can be easily replaced.

Flowers aren't the only plants that suffer from heat stress. Your home lawn suffers, too.

If your lawn is fescue, you must keep it watered if you want it to survive. Bermuda, and many other grasses, go semi-dormant and turn a little yellow when heat and drought stressed. But, unlike fescue, they will recover pretty well with the first rainfall.

UGA experts recommend giving your lawn about an inch of water per week. And they suggest watering early in the morning for the best use of water.

Sources:

- **Walter Reeves**
- **Gary Wade**

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