



## **To Dos and Not-To-Dos Key To Garden's Survival**

Sometimes the best hope for survival a drought-stressed garden or landscape has is an educated gardener. In some cases, knowing what not to do is just as important as knowing what to do.

Fertilizing and routine pruning, for instance, encourages new growth that requires more water.

Fertilizing isn't wise during long dry periods if you don't water regularly, say University of Georgia experts. Fertilizers are chemically salts and can dehydrate plants' roots.

Routine pruning stimulates growth, something you don't want when your main goal for your plants is survival.

You may need to do some selective pruning, though, when a plant wilts and begins showing leaf scorch, and branches start dying. In this case, cutting back the plant's top will reduce the water demand the foliage places on the roots.

When you water, use a garden hose to direct water only to wilting plants. Give priority to trees and shrubs planted within the past four months. Water these plants every week or so when it doesn't rain.

Annual and perennial plants demand more water than woody ornamentals. But wait for them to wilt before watering.

If outdoor watering restrictions keep you from watering anything, cut back annual and perennial flowers that wilt.

The best thing to do to help plants survive drought is to put mulch over their roots. Three to five inches of organic mulch, such as pine straw or pine bark mini nuggets, will help hold water in the soil.

Two to three sheets of wet newspaper under the mulch will help conserve moisture even better.

Source:

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