



GARDENING BY THE MOON

HEAT ADVISORIES AND PLANT CARE

Submitted by

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The heat has arrived and this year may seem unusual to you, but to have one of these extremely hot summers, that everyone wants to forget, happens occasionally in Texas. Texas is no stranger to extreme heat any summer but if you were in Texas in 1980 as I was, you endured one of the hottest summers on record. I was working for Texas A&M Extension Service and I remember all the problems associated with that summer heat. We learned a lot about plant care during that time.

If you have been outside, you have felt the effect of the heat and so have your plant materials. The following recommendations are important for you:

- You will need to follow all watering restrictions for the city where you live. Most cities have already issued levels of restriction for watering. Become familiar with the days and times you are allowed to water.
- Many of your homes have drip irrigation around foundations and shrub beds and bubblers on trees. These zones need to run as much as restrictions allow.
- If you have a newly planted landscape, most cities will allow you to water for survival. Again, check your city guidance.
- Bermudagrass turf can tolerate and recover from drought easier than your other plants, so if restrictions become more severe with the continued heat, focus on your foundation, trees and shrubs. If you have St. Augustinegrass or Zoysiagrass turf, handwatering might be needed on this turf to keep it from dying.
- Hand watering can be a very effective way of adding extra water efficiently to your plants. You can add water only where needed without wasting a large volume of water. Respond by adding extra water to plants as soon as you see wilting or you observe the first sign of burned leaves to prevent leaf scorch.
- Do not fertilize plants during this time to prevent efficient use of fertilizer or burn.

Let me stress, if restrictions increase, focus first on watering your foundation, trees, shrubs and container plantings. Your Bermudagrass turf will turn brown and go dormant, but it will recover once restrictions are lifted and rainfall has returned. And if it doesn't, reseeding is much less expensive than replacing your valuable trees and shrubs! If you have St. Augustinegrass or Zoysiagrass, extra hand watering on this turf may be necessary to keep it alive.