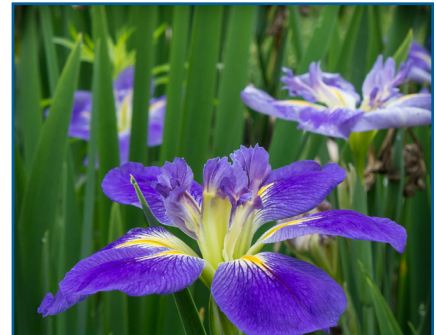


Dealing with Drought

Water restrictions need not mean that our yards must evolve into gravel and cactus. We can prepare and maintain our landscapes to make them more resilient and more WaterSmart:

- **Use compost** to help the soil hold more water and to retain more rainfall and irrigation in the yard. As compost breaks down, it improves the health of the soil, which helps plants survive stressful conditions like drought and disease. Also, the beneficial microbes and microorganisms in compost break up compacted soils, allowing water to penetrate.
- **Water less often** but more deeply to force the plants' roots to grow deeper in search of water. Roots that grow near the surface will dry out quickly.
- **Choose plants** that suit our climate and the spot where they are planted. Native and non-invasive adapted WaterSmart **plants** can withstand periods of drought and flood.
- **Group plants** by their water needs.
- **Water early** in the morning or after sunset, when less water is lost to evaporation, and winds are usually calmer.
- **Train plants** to require less water by slowly reducing the amount you give them. Most established plants and lawns can get by on 1 inch of water once or twice per week.
- **Set your lawnmower** at the highest setting, and lengthen the amount of time between cuttings. Longer grass blades help shade the soil. Lawns cut short require more water.
- **Hold off** fertilizing your lawn until late fall and then only if there is substantial rainfall.
- **Add mulch** to a depth of 2 to 3 inches to conserve moisture, reduce soil compaction, and keep the plant roots at a more even temperature.



Photos by Chris LaChance

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TEXAS COASTAL WATERSHED PROGRAM

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