

Smart watering conserves water and saves money

Summer heat can be harmful in various ways. People and pets can quickly succumb to the summer sun, which can cause sunburn, heat exhaustion and heat stroke when people and their animals spend too much time outdoors without adequate protection.

Landscapes are also vulnerable to summer heat, which can quickly spoil the most lush lawns and robust gardens. Effective watering can help lawns and gardens withstand summer heat, but improper watering can deprive landscapes of the water they need to survive. Homeowners concerned about their lawns and gardens surviving the summer can take the following approach to conserve water, save money and maintain their landscapes.

- Start early. Homeowners may feel that the hottest times of the day are

when lawns and gardens will be most in need of water, so that's the best time to set sprinklers or grab the hose and get to work. But in many areas, watering between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., when summer temperatures tend to peak, can be both wasteful and ineffective. That's because watering between those hours will cause much of the water to quickly evaporate, robbing lawns and gardens of the water they need to withstand the heat. Homeowners who water when water is most likely to evaporate may feel they need to water more, and that only wastes water.

It's best to consult a local landscaping professional in your area to determine the best time to water each day, but in many regions the best time to water is between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m., when temperatures are generally lower, the

sun is not at its peak and winds are not as strong.

- Place sprinklers correctly. If you do not have an in-ground irrigation system and don't intend to install one, you will likely use lawn sprinklers to water the lawn. When placing these sprinklers, turn them on and then document their trajectory before moving on to the next area. You want to make sure the water from the sprinklers is not landing on sidewalks, patios or streets, especially if your community typically institutes drought restrictions that limit how much you can water. In such instances, you'll need to make the best use of the water you're allowed to use, so make sure none of it is watering the driveway.

- Let well-fed lawns go dormant during drought. Lengthy droughts tend to be accompanied by water restrictions,

and such restrictions can frustrate homeowners who don't want to see all of the hard work they've put in to this point go to waste. But grass that has thus far been well cared for can withstand drought and still recover when rains once again fall and temperatures cool come autumn. If you plan to let the lawn go dormant, keep kids, pets and visitors off the grass, as dormant lawns are highly susceptible to damage.

Summer is an enjoyable time of year, but lawn and garden enthusiasts may be concerned for their properties when summer heat sets in. A few simple strategies can help lawns make it through the season unscathed.

Reclaimed wood adds instant appeal to home projects

Repurposing salvaged wood is a popular trend in the home improvement industry. Not only can using salvaged wood give a home a one-of-a-kind look, but it's a handy way to incorporate the three Rs of green living into your lifestyle: reduce, reuse and recycle.

Reclaimed wood is often used in flooring, beams, wall treatments, and doors, but it also can be turned into furniture or home accent items. Reclaimed wood adds warmth and historical interest to a home's decor that newer materials may lack. Although finding wood that can be salvaged takes time and some legwork, such efforts can quickly pay off. Many businesses are now devoted to reclaimed timber, which can help make the process of finding and using salvaged wood even easier.

Homeowners considering reclaimed wood may be interested to learn that such wood can serve various functions aside from benefitting the planet.

- Match old-growth wood. New regulations may prevent certain species of trees from being cut down. That means it can be challenging to match old wood in a home, particularly if you're looking to maintain historical value and authenticity. Relying on salvaged wood items can alleviate this concern, ensuring that you

can find rare woods that are no longer available brand new.

- Salvaged wood has character. It's difficult to mimic the natural age marks and character that older wood may have. Instead of being raised on farms, wood harvested decades ago probably grew in natural environments, making the wood both durable and strong. The color and grain of salvaged wood may also be unique.

- Look at objects in a new way. Doors are versatile pieces of reclaimed lumber because they're already flat and rather large. Doors can be turned into headboards, tables or benches. Staircase or porch posts can be turned into candlestick holders, and wood shutters can dress up walls and provide a place to hang artwork and other wall items.

- Reclaimed wood can be found everywhere. Most people do not have to look too far to find wood they can salvage. Check salvage yards, landfills, dumpsters in front of older homes being renovated, or older, unused barns in rural settings. You also can collect driftwood or discarded shipping crates.

While some reclaimed wood can be used as-is, some pieces may require millwork, including sanding, cutting, shaping, and finishing. If you do not have these skills, you probably will have

to hire someone who does.

The Internet is awash with ideas for putting salvaged wood to use. Get inspired and then find the pieces that will fit your project.

