

## Drought Problems Continue to Affect Plantings

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It seems that extremes of weather have become the norm in Chicagoland.

For the three summers we have had drought, it was broken only by record floods.

This year most areas are the driest in over 50 years.

Lawns, are probably the most drought-tolerant of all our plantings. While we prefer to see the grass green and fresh, grass will survive drought very nicely by drying up and remaining dormant. When rains come the grass simply resumes growth. Newly laid sod, or new seedlings are the exception and must be watered until firmly established.

Annual flowers are shallowly rooted and will need water every couple of days. If water is in short supply, rather than sprinkling the entire flower bed, give each plant a cup or two of water.

In the vegetable garden, apply water to each plant where possible, and use a mulch to conserve water.

Newly planted trees and shrubs are major investments. Thoroughly soak them every 15 to 20 days to completely wet the soil ball and surrounding soil. Set the hose and let it run slowly under each plant until the water begins to run off.

Many of the problems we are now seeing on established trees and shrubs are due to the alternate drought and flood they have suffered through the past few years.

Shallowly rooted maples, crabapples, pines, and other trees and shrubs in shallow soils have died back or even died completely this spring.

When we dig to look at the roots of these plants, we find that the fine roots, those that absorb water and nutrients, are dead.

Big shrubs and large trees need a lot of water. If your tree wilts, set sprinklers under it and apply an inch and a half of water to the entire area under the branch spread. Put a coffee can under the sprinkler so you know when you have applied enough water. You may need to soak a large tree every three weeks during drought.

If we continue to be dry, even controlled watering of selected plants may be restricted. In this area we are accustomed to having as much water as we need. But when it comes to making the tough choice, water for drinking, sanitation and fire fighting is much more important than a green lawn.

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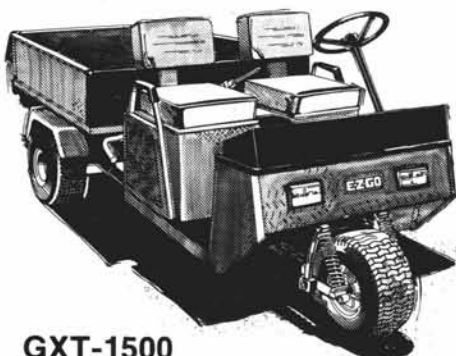
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