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Producing profits through bedding plants, ornamentals & trees

SPECIAL SECTION OF *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT*

In a **bout** with **DROUGHT**



Drought-resilient landscapes don't have to look like they were designed to save water.

THE HEAT of summer is here, threatening to wilt and wither your carefully designed landscapes ... unless you installed drought-tolerant landscape plants. Choosing the right cultivars and following simple installation advice can keep your clients' landscapes looking vibrant through the hottest weather.

"We want people to become drought resilient ahead of time," says Kelly Smith, drought

THE RIGHT PLANTS CAN BEAT THE HEAT. BY JAMIE J. GOOCH

resources specialist at the National Drought Mitigation Center in Lincoln, NE. "Drought is a slow-moving natural disaster that people don't think about until it happens. Over time, it can cause a lot of environmental stress and human hardship. It's going to happen. We want people to be prepared."

Diversity equals strength

Perhaps the best way to prepare a landscape for drought conditions is with biodiversity. Different types of plants, trees and shrubs — as opposed to a monoculture — are better able to resist stressful conditions. Part of that biodiversity should come in the form of native plants. Natives are more likely to tolerate drought conditions because they've become conditioned to the weather patterns of a particular area over many generations. Depending on the region, native species can offer a number of height, texture and color options.

However, there are many non-native species that can be used to add color and additional interest. The key is to choose drought tolerant

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cultivars for your area. Many local extension offices often maintain a list of drought-tolerant plants specific to their regions.

Consider a plant's water requirements when designing the landscape. Grouping plants with similar water needs will allow for easier and more efficient irrigation of that grouping, rather than watering an entire bed of plants that may not need additional water

"The landscape industry has a big opportunity to make communities more drought resilient," Smith says. "By making domestic ecosystems that have greater diversity and drought resistance, landscapers can really have an impact."

Watching water use

As more parts of the country with limited water resources become increasingly urbanized, water shortages are becoming commonplace. Droughts bring emergency water restrictions and new legislation geared toward making the most out of

DID YOU KNOW?

- > Landscaping accounts for about half the water Californians use at home.
- > Every day in the United States, we drink about 110 million gallons of water.
- > A leaky faucet can waste 20 gallons of water a day.
- > Watering your grass and trees more heavily, but less often, saves water and builds stronger roots.

— Sources: American Water Works Association, Mojave Water Agency, and Sunnyslope County Water District.

each drop of water — and with good reason. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, more than 50 percent of water used to irrigate lawns and gardens is wasted. And that's a lot of waste because between 30 and 50 percent of the average American household's water use goes to outdoor uses.



This drought-resilient landscape includes a man-made stream that will create an attractive dry streambed in times of drought.

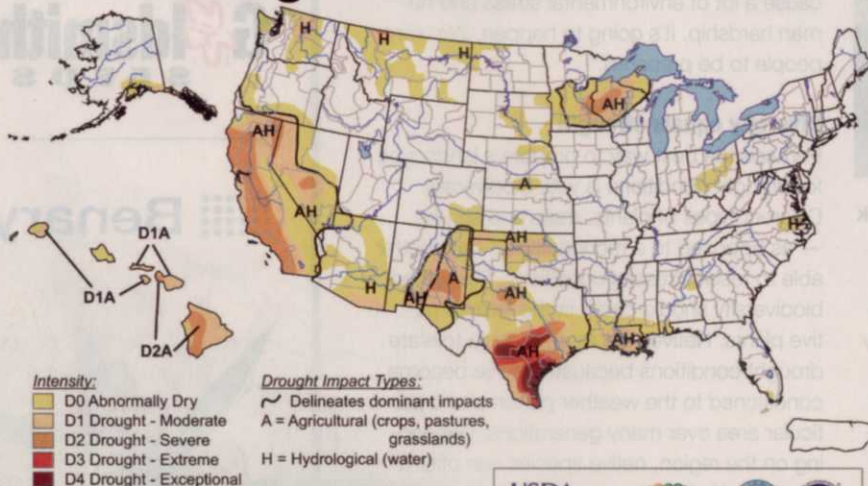
Some communities offer incentives for homeowners to make their landscapes more drought resilient and conserve water. By doing a little research, these incentives can be used to help bring in new clients and offer new services.

New irrigation technology is one way to save water and keep your clients' landscapes looking lush. Smart controllers monitor soil moisture, rain, wind, slope and plant type to help apply the right amount of water to the right areas. Installing, maintaining and inspecting irrigation systems can bring extra business to your company. For more information about smart irrigation, visit www.epa.gov/watersense/sim.

"Landscapers have a vested interest in being drought resilient, especially if they're installing lawns and other water-intensive plants," Smith says. "When coming out of a dry time, when homeowners' water-hungry installations have died off, landscapers can help people select drought-resilient plantings. It's a good business angle and good for future drought preparation."

U.S. Drought Monitor

June 23, 2009
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>



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GOLDSMITH SEEDS VARIETY FOCUS: CORA® CASCADE™ TRAILING VINCA

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