For More Information

NebGuides

- Stormwater Management: Landscape Water Conservation G1859
- Perennial Flowers for Water-wise Gardeners (G1214)
- Mulches for the Home Landscape (G1257)
- Landscape Sustainability (G1405)

Backyard Farmer
http://byf.unl.edu
Nebraska Statewide Arboretum-
http://arboretum.unl.edu.plantinfo.html

For more information, see University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extension sites droughtresources.unl.edu and water.unl.edu

For more water saving ideas, see the companion publications:

- **Make Every Drop Count In Your Landscape**
- **Make Every Drop Count In Your Home**

Drought

Droughts are a normal part of life in the Great Plains and for Nebraska. Many droughts are short-term or only affect small areas, but multiple-year droughts like the Dust Bowl of the 1930s are relatively common as well. In 2012, the entire state of Nebraska experienced the driest summer in more than 50 years. Conserving water in your home, lawn and landscape helps to reduce the impact of residential water demand on our natural resources.

Produced by University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extension in cooperation with:

Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services Regulation and Licensure
Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
National Drought Mitigation Center
Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
Nebraska League of Municipalities
Nebraska Rural Water Association
Nebraska Well Drillers Association
UNL Conservation and Survey Division

University of Nebraska Lincoln EXTENSION

Know how. Know now.

Make Every Drop Count

On Your Lawn

IANR

Make Every Drop Count in Your Lawn

Efficient water use on the lawn will provide for plant needs while conserving precious water resources.

1. In general, existing Kentucky bluegrass lawns require more applied irrigation water in the summer than in spring and fall.
2. Water to the bottom of the roots. Use a screwdriver, trowel, small shovel, or soil probe to determine how deep the roots are and how far the water has soaked in. Try to keep the soil moist about a half inch deeper than the deepest living roots.
3. Measure the amount of water applied in a 15-20 or 30-minute periods using collection devices such as tuna or coffee cans. Adjust the runtime to deliver the required amount. Change the runtime seasonally and remember to subtract any rainfall.
4. Observe your automatic sprinkler system at least once per month. Look for heads that don't turn, that spray the street or sidewalk, bent or damaged heads, and clogged or worn nozzles.
5. Adjust heads as landscape plants grow larger and begin to block the spray pattern. New installations of benches, decks, etc. also can decrease irrigation efficiency.
6. When watering on a slope, use "delayed starts." Run sprinklers until you notice runoff, then stop. Wait 3 hours, then resume. Aerate in spring or fall to increase infiltration.
7. Water in the early morning (4 to 10 am). Watering is more efficient in the morning due to less evaporation and low wind speed.
8. Return grass clippings to the lawn using a recycling type mower. Clippings are a good nutrient source, and help to conserve moisture.
9. Consider allowing Kentucky bluegrass and buffalograss lawns to go dormant. Irrigate dormant turf with ¼ inch applications every two weeks to prevent death of the dormant crowns
10. Minimize foot traffic and mowing on dormant turf.
11. Tall fescue lawns do not recover well if allowed to go dormant in severe drought conditions.
12. Consider reducing the amount of fertilizer throughout the summer to produce less growth and moisture loss.
13. Mow Kentucky bluegrass lawns at 2 ½ to 3 inches, and tall fescue lawns in the 3-4 inch range to conserve moisture.
14. When overseeding, irrigate lightly and frequently. The new turf plants have a shallow root system, so timing should be adjusted accordingly.
15. Aerate bluegrass and tall fescue lawns in spring or fall (late spring for buffalograss or zoysiagrass) to increase water infiltration.
16. Reduce thatch layers with a power rake if they exceed 0.75 inches. Dethatching should be done in spring or fall for bluegrass or tall fescue and late spring for zoysiagrass or buffalograss.