



Douglas County Dirt

Douglas County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 7

Total Watering Ban in Douglas County~ 7/1/07

News from the President of DCMGA

Hello fellow gardeners,

Well, the absence of significant rain seems to continue. I was grateful for the shower at my house last Friday the 15th. Many of my plants and trees are showing some signs of stress. Hopefully conditions will improve. Please note that as of July 1, 2007, Douglas County has a total outdoor watering ban. Also note the watering saving articles on page 2 and 3 of this issue. Thanks to Rachel Hendee and Randy Cooper for this valuable information.

We have some very faithful members who continue to care for the vegetable garden, enabling it to produce a good amount of vegetables. We also have a group that continues to water and care for the plants at the CAC and the greenhouse. Both thrive because of the care they receive.

Janet Deal and Lorri Mason presented a well thought out and beautifully written proposal for a new rose garden project at the Woodie Fite Senior Center. There are several members already set to work on this project, but we can always use more. If you are interested contact a board member or Kevin Livingston or Janet or Lori.

Date of our July monthly meeting has been changed due to the July 4th holiday. It will be the second Thursday, July 12th. The meeting will return to its normal first Thursday of month routine in August. Our July speaker, Doug Dannels, will speak on water gardens, so please come and enjoy. Let's all go play in the Dirt! Sharon Morton

Next Meeting:

July 5, 2007

Douglasville, GA

6:30 for pot-luck
dinner

7:00 meeting
begins

**How to get to
the meeting
site:**

St. Julian's
Episcopal
Church

**5400 Stewart
Mill Rd**

**Take Chapel Hill
Road to Stewart Mill
Road (Intersection
at Target and Shell
gas station)
From I-20 turn right
on Stewart Mill
Road. Church is
about 1 ½ miles on
the right.**

July 5, 2007



USING WATER EFFICIENTLY IN YOUR GARDEN



For those lucky few people who have actually had a measurable amount of rainfall lately, the rest of us are envious. Regardless of the amount of water that has fallen on your garden, we must face the reality of how important a resource water really is, and use it wisely and efficiently. I, for one, am not about to let my plants wither and die. But how we go about keeping the plants alive is important. The way water is applied to plants can be the difference between survival and death. Applying water overhead may imitate rain, but it is actually a very wasteful way in which to water plants. Evaporation can cause a good portion of the water to never make it to the root zone. A better way to water is to apply directly to the soil surface, at a fairly slow rate. Most soils, both garden soils and potting soils, do not absorb water as fast as we can apply it with a garden hose. When this happens, the water runs off away from the intended target (in the ground) or, in a container, runs around the edge of the soil and out of the bottom of the container. And the problem is even made worse when the soil is dry, as it then tends to repel water. Two ways to apply water at a slow rate and at the soil where it can be best used, are soaker hoses and drip systems.

SOAKER HOSES

Soaker hoses are basically hoses that leak, everywhere. The hose transports water, but small openings allow some of that water to escape throughout the entire length. My favorite type of soaker hose is the round black type. This hose is made from recycled tire rubber (about 65%), is fairly UV light resistant, and can be buried. Soaker hoses are most efficient at low water pressures (10-20 psi) which means the water coming out of the hose will be pretty much the same along the entire length, as long as the hose is fairly level. A 1/2" soaker hose will put out about .6-.9 gpm (gallons per minute) per 10 foot section of hose at 10psi. The maximum length of the soaker hose should be no more than 100'. In clay soils the soaker hoses should be about 24" apart (16-18" in sandy soil). Because of the small openings in the hose, a filter is recommended to keep particles from clogging the hose. A pressure regulator is also advised for best performance of the soaker hose.

DRIP SYSTEMS

Drip systems water by using a distribution network of tubing (1/2", 1/4", and 1/8") and emitters. The emitters allow water flow out of the delivery network at a very slow rate (1/2 to 5 gph-gallons per hour). Drip systems, like soaker hoses, work best at relatively low water pressures, generally 20 psi. Unlike soaker hoses, drip systems can apply the water to pretty much to the exact spot in the garden that needs to be watered. Emitters are really the heart of a drip system. They are designed to deliver a specific amount of water at a very slow rate. Different emitters (different gallonage) can be used on the same line. You can use a 1gph emitter to water a hosta and three 5gph emitters to water a 12 foot tall Japanese maple, all on the same line. There are also pressure compensating emitters, which means that the drip system does not have to be installed on level ground, and the emitter that is at a higher elevation and that at a lower level will still put out their correct amount of water. Drip tubing is available with emitters already installed at regular interval, or you can design your own to fit any situation. For example: you have a patio with many different size planters and hanging baskets on an arbor. You can customize a drip system that will deliver relatively the same amount of water needed for a 12" pot or a 24" tub. And the drip system has the flexibility to water the pots on the ground as well as the hanging pots, all at the same time. Soaker hoses are available in many lengths and there are kits that allow you to make it fit your precise needs. Drip systems also come in starter kits, or as individual components. The fittings for the drip system are compression fittings (they just push on the tubing) requiring no glue because of the low operating pressure

FUTURE WATERING

The days of abundant water with which to irrigate our ornamental plants may be at an end. We need to be able to use whatever water we have available as efficiently as we can. Soaker hoses and drip systems are a step in that direction.

by Randy Cooper, DC Master Gardener



VEGETABLE GARDENING CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The Douglas County Cooperative Extension is pleased to announce winners in the 21st annual Home Vegetable Gardening Contest. Categories and winners include:

Best Large Garden	Ray Johnson	\$100.00
Best Medium Garden	Buford Portwood	\$100.00
Best Small Garden	Ed Clay	\$100.00
Best Youth Garden	Joel McManus	\$100.00

Honorable Mention: Howard Hilton, Larry Wenger, Hyman Collins, Earl Albertson, Jerry Bray, and Wayne Pritchett

The gardens were judged by the Douglas County Master Gardeners, a volunteer organization affiliated with the Cooperative Extension. Judging criteria included weed control, layout and design, yield of vegetables, and overall appearance. Winners will receive a plaque, And check for \$100.00. Douglas County Farm Bureau and Regions Bank sponsored the contest. Awards will be presented on Saturday June 23rd, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. at the Master Gardener Community Garden at the Douglas County Board of Health on Selman Drive.



Watering Ideas to Share

Just thought I would pass this idea on....a good way to collect a little water for plants in your yard is to put a bucket under the condensation hose from your air conditioner. I get about 3 to 4 gallons a day doing this.

Also....with everyone except businesses being on water restrictions, please consider asking businesses who are wasting water to re-think how they are doing it. I was at Wal-Mart yesterday and was angered by the way they were watering plants in the parking lot. In the middle of the afternoon, they had a large fan lawn sprinkler (the kind that goes way up in the air, back and forth), watering more of the parking lot than the plants. Part of it was watering about a 30' x 30' area of just parking lot. The plants in the pots are so big the water just was running off the leaves and onto the parking lot instead of going into the pots. They also had a bad leak where two hoses connected. I spoke to a manager and voiced my concern and suggested hand watering at the base of the pots and mentioned that the way they were watering was the least efficient way they could water. She said they tried watering by hand, but it did no good. (it is because they still overhead water by hand). I suggested watering at the base of the plant instead of on top and gave her the reasons why. She thanked me and said she would go right away and talk to the employees in the plant dept about changing things. I hope things changed. Rachel Hendee



Douglas County Master Gardener Association

www.dcdirt.org

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Your input is needed.

For newsletter articles, tips, hints, anecdotes, recipes, book reviews, website reviews, gardening and/or shops or online sources, and ideas: Email: MJ_Cardell@yahoo.com Newsletter deadline is the 20th of each month.

Did you know this newsletter is also posted at our web site in full color, so you can get your dirt online?

GMGA Mission Statement:



To stimulate the love for and increase the knowledge of gardening, and to voluntarily and enthusiastically share this knowledge with others.

Hello All!

Please call Randy with questions on the Cultural Arts Center 770-920-2193, Jan for the greenhouse 770-489-9276 and James for the veggie garden at 770-489-4680 or MaryJane at 770-944-2780 Thanks everyone! Jan

Calendar Creation

We are in the process of creating a yearly calendar of events that DC gardeners would want to participate in or attend. For example, May is our plant sale month. The first Thursday of each month is our regular pot luck dinner and meeting.

If you know of other specific events that need to be on our calendar, please email them to Melanie Cardell at MJ_Cardell@yahoo.com.

July Meeting Date Cannot Change due to scheduled events at the church:
Thursday, July 5, 2007



Putting Knowledge to Work