

# Ways to Conserve Water in the Garden

Horticulture Magazine: Maria Woodie

When it comes to growing a lush, thriving garden, water is usually essential. However, if you want to be a little more eco friendly, lower your water bill or both, there are ways to conserve water and still have a beautiful garden.

Here are 5 easy water-saving tips for the garden:

- **Best time to water your plants:** Water your plants in the early morning (before 9:00 am) or in the late evening (after 4:00 pm), when it is cooler in temperature and the water is less likely to evaporate. Watering in the early morning also helps lower the chances of plant disease caused by fungus. Make sure to water at the base of the plant so it goes straight to the roots. Try installing an irrigation system, especially one made with soaker hoses or drip irrigation, to help reduce excess water and direct it to the plant roots.
- **Collect rainwater:** When the rain falls, collect the water in rain barrels (**shown**)! You can place one right under a drainpipe. Try using a barrel with a faucet for easier access to the water. Worried about your landscape design? Use a barrel that is aesthetically pleasing that can fit into your garden/yard for a touch of eccentric, hardscape décor.
- **Mulch/compost:** Adding mulch on top of your soil can help to lock in moisture and prevent the water-stealing weeds from growing. If weeds have grown, make sure to pull them quickly so your plants do not have to compete for nourishment. Compost will also help by adding moisture.
- **Make your paths/walkways/driveways porous:** Permeable hardscapes help water percolate through, seeping into the ground beneath rather than running off the sides.
- **Plant selection:** When it comes to conserving water in the garden, the easiest thing you can do is choose plants with this notion in mind. First research what the actual watering needs are for the plants you already have or hope to grow, so that you are not watering too much or too little. Try using drought-tolerant plants to cut down on the amount of water. Locally native plants are a good alternative because they are already adapted well to your specific climate and rainfall levels. Ask your local nursery or surf the web for native species for your area. Try implementing the method of xeriscaping—conserving water through landscape design—to create a stunning garden centered around water conservation. You can also group your plants together based on their watering needs to help make the task of watering not only easier but also more efficient. Try planting on slopes in your yard to discourage runoff water from eroding your ground but instead, using it to help quench your plants' thirst.