Monday, Jan. 22, 2024

Even in winter, gardens need water

K-State horticulture expert shares tips for watering home landscapes

MANHATTAN — Yards may need another shot of moisture even after recent rain and snow to alleviate stress in lawns and gardens, said Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini.

"A good, deep watering with moisture reaching at least a foot down into the soil is much better than several light sprinklings that just wet the top portions of the soil," Domenghini said. "A deep watering will ensure that the majority of roots have access to water."

Domenghini urged homeowners to test the moisture content in their yard's soil by pushing a metal rod or wooden dowel into the ground. "Dry soil is much harder to push through than wet," she said. Measure how far down the implement goes to determine the amount of moisture is in the soil.

"Although all perennial plants benefit from moist soils before winter, it is especially important for newly planted or over-seeded lawns, as well as newly transplanted trees and shrubs due to their limited root systems," Domenghini said.

"Even trees and shrubs planted within the last 2-3 years are more sensitive to drought than a well-established plant. Evergreens are more at risk because moisture is lost from the foliage."

Domenghini shared a few tips for watering common areas of the yard:

**Trees and shrubs planted within the last year.** Drill a small hole in a five-gallon bucket near the bottom, then fill the bucket and let the water dribble out slowly next to the tree. Refill the bucket once so that you apply 10 gallons. Slow release bags with micropores can be purchased as an alternative to using a bucket. Larger trees planted 2-3 years prior may require more water.

**Large trees.** Using a soaker hose, circle the trunk one-half the distance to the dripline, or the outermost reach of branches. On smaller trees, you may need to circle the tree several times so that tree roots will be watered.

**Newly established bed or foundation plantings.** Hook the beginning and end of a soaker hose to a Y-adapter to equalize pressure, which encourages more uniform watering.

**Fall planted or overseeded lawns.** Use an overhead sprinkler. Watering to a depth of 12 inches is more difficult; try to reach at least six inches deep.

Domenghini said watering once a month if conditions are dry and warm should be enough to help landscapes through the winter.

Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly [Horticulture Newsletter](http://ksre-learn.com/horticulture-winter-watering) with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens. The newsletter is
available to view online or can be delivered by email each week.

Interested persons can also send their garden and yard-related questions to Domenghini at cdom@k-state.edu, or contact your local K-State Research and Extension office.

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
K-State Research and Extension local offices, https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html

K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county extension offices, experiment fields, area extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus in Manhattan. For more information, visit www.ksre.ksu.edu. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

###

As the nation's first operational land-grant institution, Kansas State University has served the people of Kansas, the nation and the world since its founding in 1863 — and it continues to set the standard as a next-generation land-grant university. K-State offers an exceptional student experience across three physical campuses and online offerings, meeting students where they are and preparing them to achieve their personal and professional goals. The university is committed to its mission of teaching, research and service through industry-connected programs, impactful research-driven solutions, and a sharp focus on community engagement and economic prosperity.

K-State News and Communications Services
Division of Communications and Marketing
128 Dole Hall
1525 Mid-Campus Drive
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
785-532-2535
media@k-state.edu
k-state.edu/media

(If you do not want to receive future news releases from Kansas State University, please email media@k-state.edu to unsubscribe.)