



# In the garden with Ed...

SPECIAL EDITION - Volume 1, Issue 2

## What's New?

GEORGIA EPD ISSUES  
STATEWIDE WATERING BAN!

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## Tips for dealing with the watering ban

In an effort to reduce the drain (sorry for the pun but we do have to keep our sense on humor) on our water resources due to the recent drought, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division today enacted a total ban on outdoor watering across the state. Trust me, as a landscaper this is not good news - Lucy still wants to shop, Jeanine is not finished at VT, and Murphy is really hooked on "Jerky Treats. But as a GA homeowner, and someone who wants to have drinking water for me, my family, and yours, I agree that we have to do something drastic until we get some substantial rains.

The good news is that we've faced this before, and it will eventually end. So DON'T panic!

The bad news is, that for the time being, we all have to put up with these new rules. I'd hate to see any of my friends and clients end up being fined, or worse yet, having your water shut off - or even worse yet - being old #7's roommate in Attica!

So what can we all do? Here are some thoughts and ideas that will help you keep your investment in your landscape and minimize the impact of this ban.

1. With new landscape you still have 30 days during which you **CAN** water professionally installed landscape. BUT - whether you used me or some other company (shame on you), the landscape **MUST** be professionally installed within the last 30 days to qualify for this exemption - so keep your receipt. (PS - Mine are smaller)
2. With existing landscape installed more than 30 days here are a few things you can do:
  - a. Keep a good layer of mulch or pinestraw around your

plants. This will help retain the moisture that we do get from Mother Nature! 3" of Mulch or 3-5" of Pine Straw is recommended. For those of you who are on the "Clark Howard" side of landscaping - please don't use leaves. Leaves tend to get thickly matted, prevent the moisture from reaching the plant roots and can actually suffocate the soil over time unless they are well mulched.

- b. I would prioritize your plants based on **Age**, **Value**, **Location**, and the **Need for Water**. What I mean here is:
  - i. **Age** - If you have trees and shrubs that have been installed for more than two years they will likely fair much better than newer plants. The root systems on older trees and shrubs have grown deeper and can pull more moisture from the soil than younger ones - so I'd worry less about them - and clay really retains moisture for a long time and very deeply once it gets wet.
  - ii. **Value** - I'd take a look at the trees, shrubs and plants in your yard and determine which ones would cost the most to replace. For example a 7' Japanese Maple or an 8' Spiral Juniper could cost as significant amount of money to replace. I can't give you the whole laundry list of plants and value, but if you have specimen trees, shrubs, roses, or that Hydrangea that you got from Grandma's garden, think about taking care of them first. Evergreen shrubs (Hollies, Junipers, etc) tend to take a drought better than a lot of other plants so they can probably survive on whatever rains we get. Annuals are at the bottom of list of plants materials as they are easily replaced and relatively inexpensive (and the summer annuals are on their last leg anyways). Lastly, if you have a Bermuda or Zoysia lawn it is about to go dormant, so I wouldn't worry much here, it should do fine with whatever rain we get. If you have Fescue lawn hold off on any fertilization, weed control application or seeding right now until we get some temperature and moisture relief.
  - iii. **Location** - In general, plants in a more shady area will need less water than those in a sunny location. The good news is that the weather will

start to cool now (unless Al Gore really is right), and the sun will be less of an issue. If you decide to use "Greywater - (see below) - I'd tend to use it on the sun exposed plants that you've decide are high up on your value chain. Give them as much as you can based on our rainfall and their individual need for water.

- iv. **Need for Water** - There are some plants that just have a lower need for water than others. Here again, I can't go into every plant in this newsletter, but in general, grasses (like *Miscanthus Sinensis*, Pampas, etc) tend to need less water than leafy plants (like Hibiscus, Camellia, etc). If you're not sure about a specific plant you can look it up on the internet on sites like [www.Monrovia.com](http://www.Monrovia.com) or one of the university sites like OSU

<http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ldplants/3plants.htm>

These sites generally have a section on "Growing Conditions" which can be very enlightening. If you notice that a specific plant is beginning to droop or brown out, that's the one that needs the most TLC - even if you have to resort to using "Greywater".

- v. **Grey Water**. You've probably heard of this but most of us are unaware of some of the key points in its usage. There are a lot of ways to get "Greywater" such as placing a bucket next to you in the shower (very stylish), scooping bathwater from your tub, giving "Sparky" a bath outside near his favorite tree, collecting runoff from your AC or dehumidifier drains etc. It's basically most any water that doesn't come out of the tap or a Perrier bottle. Here is an excerpt from a recently published article from Mexico State University that I've edited for your use: (I figured you didn't need to know that cactus doesn't need much water but Avocados and Chile peppers do!) Seriously - there are some good points here - please read on...

"Greywater is suitable for irrigating lawns, trees, ornamentals, and some food crops. Apply Greywater directly to the soil, not through a sprinkler or any method that would allow contact

with the above-ground portion of the plants.

- Root crops which are eaten uncooked should not be irrigated with Greywater.
- Plants that thrive only in acid soil should not be watered with Greywater, which is alkaline.
- Use Greywater only on well-established plants, not seedlings or young plants.
- Disperse Greywater over a large area, and rotate with fresh water to avoid buildup of sodium salts.

In addition, when irrigating outdoors, (*who the hell irrigates indoors?*) apply Greywater only to flat areas where runoff is not likely.

When reusing laundry water for irrigation, do not use liquid fabric softener or detergents including softener (use softener sheets in the dryer instead). Water should not be reused if the laundry includes diapers (*Good thinking especially on your basil*). Wash water containing gasoline, diesel, or similar pollutants, should not be used. (*So the next time you toss your BMW engine into the old Whirlpool don't use this water - what the heck do they do to get "diesel fuel" into their wash water down in New Mexico anyway?*)

#### UNTREATED GREYWATER

Observe these precautions when using untreated Greywater:

1. Greywater containing sodium, bleach or borax can damage plants. For this reason, water from automatic dishwashers should not be used for irrigation (*and how the hell would you get it out anyway?*).
2. Water used to wash cooking utensils in the sink may contain grease, fats and oils, and is not acceptable for Greywater use.
3. If you plan to use water from your

washing machine, avoid liquid fabric softeners and detergents with softeners.”

3. Fall Annuals - Although our fall newsletter is currently in for final editing - and it deals a lot with fall annual planting - and it's also how I pay my bills - I'd hold off for now. Many of the "Big Box" stores have been selling pansies, violas, etc for weeks, and even some nurseries have gotten into the act (but then again Wal-Mart had dancing Santas out in August). It's too hot and too early to plant fall annuals anyways, so don't get tempted. Mid to late October is generally the best time, and you don't want to plant anything less than 4" pots anyways which are not generally available yet locally. I'll send out the fall newsletter in a couple of weeks - and maybe we'll have some cooler weather, some rain, and a better idea of what's happening with the watering situation by then. So just sit back and watch the Dawgs, Yellow Jackets or better yet - the Hokies for now and leave the annuals for later in the season.

The end...

OK - so - other than all of us getting together and doing a rain dance that about covers it for this topic. At least for now. If something changes, or I find any other tips that may prove useful I'll drop you all another quicker note! And I promise it will be quick. If you have any specific questions on your plants please don't hesitate to call me. I'm always here to help.

Let us know if this was helpful - or if you'd like to be removed from our mailing list. And once again - Thanks for being a client - and for all of the great referrals - we really appreciate you. What I say means nothing but what you say about us means everything!

Ed & the GLD team

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