

Minimize the Impact of Extreme Weather on Your Landscape

We have been experiencing extreme weather, which we anticipate will continue. Whether it's record-breaking heat or strong winds and downpours that accompany our monsoon storms, it's important to take extra precautions with your landscape to better ensure your plants survive and thrive.

During our extreme weather, here are a few basic guidelines to protect plants and trees while increasing watering efficiency.

Give Your Plants a Break

With the stress of extreme heat, it's best to give your plants some space.



In other words, avoid planting, pruning, shearing, and even light trimming when the temperatures are high. Additionally, you should avoid using chemicals, including fertilizer. These activities make your plants more sensitive to the heat and sun and could cause them to take up more water to repair damage and manage the added stress.

If you have potted plants, consider relocating them to a cooler and shadier spot in your yard, keeping the pot and rootball out of the direct afternoon sun.

Water Deeper but Infrequently

Excessive heat can harm trees and shrubs, especially young ones that have not had time to grow strong roots. So closely monitor all your plants and trees, even established ones, for signs of stress.

When your plants do need supplemental watering, simply increase the watering time so the water can soak deep into the soil—no need to add an extra day. In the extreme summer heat, watering your plants more often is tempting, but desert-adapted shrubs and trees do not need to be watered more than twice a week once established. Deep infrequent watering encourages strong, healthy root systems that can better tolerate intense heat and periods of drought.

Watering at the correct time is also vital to ensuring healthier plants and less water waste in the hottest months. Make sure you are not watering during the sunniest and hottest hours of the day when water will simply evaporate; instead, aim to water early in the morning - one to three hours before sunrise.

And, when we get monsoon activity, turn off your irrigation for a few days. If you have a smart irrigation timer, it should automatically adjust.

Keep an Eye on Your Irrigation System

Another key element to keeping your plants healthy is ensuring your irrigation system is running correctly, especially when the weather intensifies in summer.

Your pipes, sprinkler heads, and drip lines are particularly susceptible to extreme weather. High temperatures, dust, and rain can clog, crack and break emitters and lines. In these situations, even when your reliable irrigation controller comes on, plants don't get watered, or gallons of wasted water can pool or run off your yard into the street. It's as simple as turning on your irrigation system and walking around to inspect that everything is working correctly.

[AMWUA's Smart Home Water Guide](#) can help.

Living in the desert, we understand that our summers can be challenging, so we must take the necessary precautions to help our plants and not harm them.

For additional landscape and watering information, visit our [Conservation Webpage](#).

For over 50 years, the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association has helped protect our member cities' ability to provide their communities with assured, safe, and sustainable water supplies. For more information, visit www.amwua.org.