



A GARDENER'S GUIDE TO WATER SAVING





A WATER-WISE GARDNER IS A RESPONSIBLE GARDNER.

Water restrictions have been lifted for Auckland Gardeners this summer. Still, with water shortages pegged to be an ongoing issue for years to come, we thought we'd share our top five tips so that you may instil some basic water-saving principles in your garden as a matter of habit.

Our Top Water-Saving Tips Include:

- Applying mulch to your garden.
- Connecting a collection tank to your downpipes.
- Educating yourself about wetting best practice.
- Using a granular watering agent on your lawn.
- Learning about the watering needs of your plants.



MULCH YOUR GARDEN

The evidence shows that the more organic content in the soil, the more it will retain moisture, and the less watering it will require.

Mulch is an excellent source of organic content; it prevents the loss of water through evaporation and can support the retention of up to 80% of moisture in the soil.

Applying a thick layer of mulch throughout your garden (100 -150mm) is an effective way of retaining a healthy level of moisture in your garden beds. Mulch will soak up any rainfall or watering and efficiently supply it to the foundations below.

Mulching will also suppress weed growth, which, if left unattended, will compete with your plants for water supply. With water restrictions in play this summer, you certainly don't want to be watering your weeds!

MULCHING TIPS:

- We recommend cambium bark mulch (sourced from sustainably harvested NZ pine) for optimum moisture retention.
- When spreading mulch, allow space around the stem of the plant - mulching too close to the base of a plant can cause rot.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF MULCHING

- Soil fertility and structure are improved.
- Mulching protects against soil erosion.
- Plants grown with mulch produce higher yields than plants grown without.



INSTALL A COLLECTION TANK

Rainwater is free, and connecting a small collection tank to your downpipe is a fantastic way to make the most of this renewable resource.

While the amount of water you capture will not be enough to run an irrigation system, it will be enough to beat the water restrictions and run a garden hose for hand watering.



ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF INSTALLING A COLLECTION TANK:

- You can use your collected rainwater for flushing the toilet and washing your car.



WATERING BEST PRACTICE

With Auckland's water restrictions on your mind this summer, it's essential to make any watering you do count! We recommend a few methods that will make your efforts more effective.

WATERING TIPS:

- It's best to water your garden every three to five days that pass without rain. Watering deeply and infrequently nourishes the root system more effectively and promotes optimum plant growth.
- Watering your garden in the early morning and late evening is ideal; this gives your plants an opportunity to access the water supply without racing the rampant evaporation that occurs during the heat of the day.
- Water the base of your plants, not the leaves, to ensure a ready supply to the root system.



USE A GRANULAR WETTING AGENT

A granular wetting agent is applied, before or after mulching, to the surface of a garden bed or lawn. Wetting agents reduce the surface tension of water, therefore, improving its ability to spread.

A wetting agent helps to pull the moisture down through the soil profile and efficiently delivers water and nutrients to the plant or surface area in question.

WETTING AGENT TIPS:

- If you're growing or protecting a new lawn this summer, we recommend applying a granular wetting agent. A simple application by hand will take you no time, can't be overdone, and could be the difference between your lawn surviving this summer's water restrictions or not!



PLANTING FOR LONG-TERM WATER SAVING

Different plants require different amounts of water for growth and overall health. While some plants are heavily dependent on steady and regular watering, others can survive on much less.

When planting, try to group plants with similar watering needs; this will not only ensure they receive the correct amount of water but will also mean that you're not wasting water on plants that don't need it.

PLANTING TIPS:

- Consider planting water-wise plants when planning your garden as a long-term solution to combatting future water restrictions.
- Ask at your local garden centre for advice on the best water-wise plants to grow in your region.

