

Heat Stress Rx



When temperatures skyrocket to the 90's, leaves may drop, wilt or curl, then turn yellow/crispy brown. Vegetables may bolt or drop blossoms, and have a hard time producing. Here are some tips for preventing/relieving heat stress:

- **Water in the early morning** to give roots a chance to drink. Watering during the hottest time of the day wastes water due to evaporation. Watering at night leaves moisture in the soil longer, slowing down the flow of oxygen to roots and increases the chances of fungal infections, ultimately doing more harm than good.
- **Water the soil**, not the leaves. Water slowly and deeply to insure that water soaks down to the root ball. Soaker hoses and drip irrigation systems set for early morning work well. Also, try a tree watering bag.
- **A couple of inches of organic mulch** help reduce moisture loss and regulate soil temperature. Prevention Tip: Soil conditioners improve water penetration and retention which helps plants cope in hot weather.
- **Hold off on planting.** New transplants are most susceptible to heat stress. Keep them in the shade and wait for a cooler day for planting.
- If possible, **move potted plants to a shadier spot**, away from a SW exposure, heat-reflecting/retaining surfaces, etc.
- **Cut back on fertilizing** during droughts. Fertilizer salts can dehydrate plant roots. plus, the extra stimulus to put on new growth will require even more water.

TIPS FROM OUR TEAM

#1: Check the soil first. The surface may look/feel dry but be moist near the roots. Insert a wooden dowel a few inches into the soil and then pull it out. Moist soil will stick to the dowel, but if it comes out clean, the soil is dry, and it's time to water.

#2: Over-watering can be just as harmful as under-watering - give your plants a drink, but don't drown them!

#3: The water inside a garden hose left in the hot sun can reach up to 130 degrees. Before watering your plants, let the water run for a minute or two until it feels cool.

#4: Some plants will wilt during the hottest part of the day, no matter how wet the soil is. (Sometimes a late afternoon mist helps reduce ambient air temperature and helps refresh foliage without over-watering.) If a plant wilts during the day but recovers at night there is adequate soil moisture. See **#1**.