

Wise Water Words

Hello Fellow Gardeners.

I hope everyone is doing well and enjoying time in your gardens.

As you all probably know, San Antonio is now under Stage 2 Watering Rules due to our ongoing drought. These rules went into effect on April 12, 2022 and limit the days, times and methods we can use to water our gardens and landscapes. I have received some questions regarding these restrictions so I thought I would highlight some information to try and answer any questions.

The SAWS drought restrictions and watering rules can be found [here](#). The blue text in italics are the restrictions as written on the website and I have added some additional notes as well:

*San Antonio Water System uses drought rules, established by city ordinance, to proactively manage the region's water resources. **Stage 1** begins when the 10-day rolling average of the aquifer level drops to 660 feet mean sea level at the monitored well. Watering with an irrigation system, sprinkler or soaker hose is allowed only once a week **before 11 a.m. or after 7 p.m.** on your designated watering day.*

***Stage 2** rules begin when the 10-day rolling average of the Edwards Aquifer level drops to 650 feet mean sea level at the monitored well. Coming out of drought stages can be considered 15 days after the aquifer is above the trigger.*

Watering with an irrigation system or sprinkler is allowed only once a week from 7-11 a.m. and 7-11 p.m. on your designated watering day as determined by the last number of your street address. No watering on weekends with a sprinkler or irrigation system.

Watering Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Last digit of address	0 or 1	2 or 3	4 or 5	6 or 7	8 or 9

This does not mean that you **must** water each week. It's important for the health of your plants that you only water your landscape as needed. Many of our native and adaptive plants and trees have established root systems and do not need to be watered every week. Check the soil moisture level before running the irrigation system. Water should be applied deeply to the soil to keep the roots at the proper depth for them to remain strong and healthy. Shallow watering results in roots at the surface of the soil and much closer to the heat of our summer days. Deeply rooted plants are much more resilient and capable of surviving the triple digits of our summers.

Watering with drip irrigation is permitted any day, but only between 7-11 a.m. and 7-11 p.m. This does not mean that you **must** run the drip irrigation system every day or even every week, and certainly not twice per day. Again, applying water to the plants only when the plants need the water results in healthier plants and less water waste. This also saves you money as you are conserving water.

Watering with a hand-held hose is allowed any time on any day. There are very few plants that need to be watered every day. Plants in small containers and some vegetable producing plants are the

exceptions to this, which is why it's important that the soil moisture level be checked before water is applied. Consider combining plants that are in small containers with other plants using a larger container and even moving the containers to a location where they get dappled sun and a bit of a break from the constant sun, if possible.

These restrictions are not only for the residents of San Antonio, but also for commercial businesses. Public parks, athletic fields, golf courses, public swimming pools, hotels, and other businesses have rules to adhere to as well. We all must do our part to conserve and protect this natural resource.

San Antonio is leading the nation in conservation practices and has been since the early 1980s. We have a lot to be proud of, but we must stay diligent to continue this progress for the future. According to the SAWS Conservation Department, the City of San Antonio Watering Rules began in 2000 with the first Drought Ordinance that was later modified in 2009 and again in 2014.

San Antonio residents have dropped their gallons per capita per day (gpcd) from 224 in 1984 to 126 in 2007, even with a 60% increase in population, largely because of the educational outreach of the SAWS Conservation Department and the Drought Restrictions.

Conservation is considered a water source like the Edwards Aquifer. San Antonio's cheapest source of water is conservation — water we don't use. That's why SAWS' proven conservation programs have become a cornerstone of the community's long-term water management and supply strategy. Please follow these rules and educate your neighbors to do the same.

For related conservation information regarding the SAWS WaterSaver Programs as well as numerous other ideas to help you save money and water in your home landscapes, go to [GardenStyleSA](#), the SAWS Conservation Department website.

Please continue to check our BCMG [website](#) for upcoming classes about how to have a more resilient landscape and many more topics. And, as always, you may access our digital gardening library [here](#) to access hundreds of publications on a variety of useful horticultural topics.

Enjoy your spring while we have it!

Conservationally yours,

Anna Vogler
Water Conservation Coordinator