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Water-Wise Gardening

Right now, parts of Northeast Kansas are experiencing mild to moderate drought. If you are in a drought, you may be tempted to irrigate your lawn and garden more. However, this can rack up quite the water bill. Before you start irrigating your landscape, make sure you minimize your watering needs with these water-wise horticultural tips.

- Mulch in-between your plants. Mulching will conserve soil moisture and prevent soil from drying out as fast.
- Check soil moisture before adding water rather than watering on a set schedule. You can use a soil probe to see what the soil looks like farther down. While the very top layer of soil may be dry, you might find that soil a few inches down still has moisture. As long as the root zone of your plants has moisture in the soil, your plants do not need more water.
- Group plants with similar water requirements together to prevent overwatering species that are more drought tolerant. If you need recommendations on drought tolerant plants, you can reach out to us for a list of options.
- Control weeds to reduce competition for soil moisture. Weeds are going to use up water, which takes away water from your plants.
- Trees benefit from deep, slow watering. If you add too much water at once, most of it will run off and not end up helping your tree. If drip irrigation is not an option a 5-gallon bucket with a small hole drilled in the side near the bottom can be used. Fill the bucket and let the water drip out slowly next to the tree. Each time the bucket drains you have applied 5 gallons of water.
- Avoid planting a ring of flowers at the base of trees. This creates an imbalance by pairing plants that require regular, shallow watering with plants that need less frequent deeper watering. The result is shallow tree root growth and the potential for basal decay.

Utilizing these tips during times of drought can help save money. Even if you are not in a drought, reducing your water usage will help promote a healthier, more sustainable environment.