

Plant of the Month

Inland sea oats

(*Chasmanthium latifolium*)

Inland Sea Oats are a versatile, clumping perennial grass with oat-like flower spikelet's. It is adaptable to full shade to full sun, from acid soil to alkaline soil, and from well-drained soil to boggy soil. In the late spring after the plant has emerged from dormancy it produces green oat-like seeds that dance in the wind at the end of each arching stem. In the fall the seeds turn a bronzy brown offering a new colorful element to the landscape. Inland Sea Oats reach, on average, a height of 2 feet but can exceed this in wetter and sunnier locations. It will also spread, or fill in, making it a great erosion control and hardy drought tolerant ground cover. Its soft gentle leaves and stems attract many butterfly species that entrust this plant as caretaker to their eggs. Yet deer tend to leave this plant alone making it a great addition to any landscape.

By: Patrick Dickinson



Immediate Actions to Prepare for Water Restrictions

- **Mulch All Planted Areas** - Maintaining a 2 to 4 inch layer in all planted beds and containers slows evaporation of water from the soil. This allows water to infiltrate the soil more efficiently, it moderates the soil temperature and breaks down into nutrients for the plants.
- **Efficient Irrigation is Essential** - Maintaining your irrigation system properly reduces the potential for stress on your landscape and reduces water loss during operation. Check for pipe and valve leaks, breaks, clogged heads, malfunctioning sprinkler heads, mis-

Irrigation Essentials

Cycle and Soak Irrigation Method

How much and how long to apply water depends on what you are watering (plant material) and soil type. Our local clay soil takes considerably longer to absorb water than loose granular sandy soil. To maximize water use and prevent runoff, use the cycle and soak method of irrigation, especially on turf areas.

Watering in increments gives clay soil adequate time to soak up water. Once the water from the first round of watering is absorbed, then water again

about an hour later. The already moist soil will enable additional water to travel even deeper to the roots and in turn, create a healthier lawn. Applying too much water in one increment results in the ground reaching a saturation point meaning any additional water will run-off and be wasted.

Different types of grass and soil will require differing amounts of water. Use a long screw driver to determine how deeply the water is penetrating into the soil in your yard.

Simply pick an area of the lawn that is irrigated and about 30 minutes after watering, push the screw driver into the soil. It will slide easily through wet soil but will be impossible to push through dry clay. The landscape has been successfully watered when the probe easily slides to a depth of 6 – 8 inches. If the soil is still dry at this depth, then another cycle may be needed to encourage deep root growth.

For information on how to set run time visit our website.

<http://dallas.tamu.edu/>

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ligned heads, excessive misting due to too much pressure, water spraying onto hard surfaces and runoff into the street. See the 'Irrigation Checkup' list on our website for ideas on how to fix these problems.

- **Always water after 6:00 pm and before 10:00 am**
- **Do not Fertilize** - Plant growth naturally slows down and/or plants go dormant during a lengthy drought. Do not encourage new growth by fertilizing.
- **Mow at Higher Setting** - Adjust the height setting on your mower up one or two notches. Taller grass will create shade, which will reduce evaporation of water from the soil and protect the roots from excessive heat.

Check out the "What's New" section on our website for additional information on drought proofing your landscape.

<http://dallas.tamu.edu/>



2013 Upcoming Courses

114 Composting
May 28, 2013
6 - 8 pm

115 Smart Watering During Restrictions
May 30, 2013
6 - 8 pm

**107 Saving from a Rainy Day
Making a Rain Barrel**
June 25, 2013
6 - 8 pm

**ARCSA Level 200 Rainwater Harvesting
Workshop**
June 24-25, 2013
9 am - 5 pm daily

**ARCSA Level 300 Rainwater Harvesting
Design and Construction Workshop**
June 26-27, 2013
9 am - 5 pm daily

Register at <http://dallas.tamu.edu/courses/>

News You Can Use

[www.Water My Yard.org](http://www.WaterMyYard.org)

The North Texas Municipal Water District, in partnership with Texas A&M AgriLife, is offering a new tool that computes landscape water needs based on local weather conditions. www.WaterMyYard.org has been developed to assist in determining an adequate amount of supplemental water that is needed to maintain a healthy landscape.

Weather stations are located in the following cities:

- McKinney
- Farmersville
- The Colony
- Wylie
- Royce City
- Rockwall
- Mesquite
- Forney

Easy Short Steps to Sign Up

It only takes a few short steps to begin receiving a weekly email to know how much water your landscape actually requires based on local weather conditions from

- effective rainfall
- solar radiation
- relative humidity
- wind.

Simply go online, select a weather station near where you are located then select the brand and type of irrigation system you have.

Based on the previous 7 days of weather conditions recorded at the weather station for that microclimate, the site will compute the amount of time your sprinkler system will need to run.

Resources

Texas ET Network

Contains:

- Weather information
- Current and average evapotranspiration data
- Irrigation watering recommendations.

<http://texaset.tamu.edu/>

Who We Are

The Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Dallas is a gateway to science, researchers and Extension educators across the U.S. The Center serves all of urban Texas, and the Dallas-Arlington-Fort Worth metropolitan area in particular.

We're on the web!!

<http://dallas.tamu.edu/>

Landscape Essentials

“Raise it up! “

Unless you want a putting green in your front or back yard, then raise the height of your mower a couple of notches and save yourself money.

Benefits of raising your mower

Allowing your grass to grow a little longer or higher during the “hot” months creates a shading, or insulating, effect on the soil. This effect slows down the water loss your lawn experiences during our brutal summer months. In turn you save yourself money by watering less.

Good Mowing Practices

•A good “rule of thumb” to practice is to mow more frequently. This thickens your lawn allowing it to choke out weeds.

•Removing no more than 1/3 the leaf blade at a time. This also reduces water loss and reduces the amount of stress your lawn will experience moving into summer.

•Don't bag it, mulch it!! When you are reusing the nutrients in your grass clippings you are reducing the amount of fertilizer you will need to buy.

Remember “Raise It Up” to save money, save water and to beat the heat this summer.

