



Gardening in All “Stages”

Members of Hill Country Master Gardeners represent six counties with a total population of more than 132,000, and within those counties there are three cities with a combined population of more than 44,000.

Population density impacts water availability in times of drought, and in turn, affects water conservation policies. The water restrictions one HCMG member has are not necessarily the same as another. To satisfy her own curiosity, HCMG Vickie (who gardens within Kerrville city limits) researched these conservation plans to know what is required of gardeners outside her own area.

The information on water restrictions shown below are those in effect as of September 13, 2011.

Bandera, Texas - Stage 3 – source: *The Bandera Bulletin* www.banderabulletin.com

Landscape watering:

1. Hand held hoses, buckets and drip irrigation on Sunday and Thursday from 8 pm to 5 am.

Prohibited water use:

1. Washing hard surfaces including buildings
2. Using water for dust control
3. Permitting water to run in a gutter or street
4. Failure to repair leaks within a reasonable period.

While there are no restrictions on car washing or filling swimming pools, Bandera residents are asked to reduce their water consumption by 35% of their normal use.

Boerne, Texas - Stage 3 – source: City of Boerne www.ci.boerne.tx.us

Landscape watering:

1. One day weekly with sprinklers between 3 am to 8 am and 8 pm to 10 pm; no weekend watering allowed;
2. Hand-held hose, bucket or soaker hose any day, any time but not recommended between noon - 7 pm.

Prohibited water use:

1. Washing hard surfaces including buildings
2. Washing vehicles except at commercial wash facilities
3. Refilling private pools except on designated water day from midnight to noon and 7 pm to midnight
4. Restaurants to serve water only upon request.
5. Using water for dust control unless it is from a reuse water source
6. Operation of an aesthetic water feature supplied with treated water

Water Conservation Suggestions:

1. Use mulch and soaker hoses in landscape beds
2. Create water zones in the yard
3. Take short showers rather than bathing
4. Use dishwashers and clothes washers with full loads
5. Clean sidewalks and patios with a broom rather than water

Comfort, Texas - Stage 2 – source: *The Boerne Star* www.boernestar.com

Landscape watering:

1. One day weekly watering with a sprinkler system between 4 am to 10 am and 8 pm to midnight
2. Hand-held hoses, buckets and drip irrigation allowed any time

Prohibited water use:

1. Landscape irrigation on weekends

Fredericksburg, Texas - Stage 4 – source: City of Fredericksburg www.fbgtx.org

Landscape watering:

1. One day per week watering; no watering on weekends
2. Hand-held hose, hose-end sprinklers, automatic sprinklers, drip irrigation and soaker hoses allowed midnight to 10 am and 6 pm to midnight
3. Vegetable and herb gardens watering allowed on off days using drip and soaker hoses from 6 to 10 pm

Prohibited Water Use:

1. Filling or refilling private pools. Water may be added to replace evaporation on the designated water day
2. Watering golf courses unless treated wastewater is used or water source other than the City of Fredericksburg
3. Washing down of hard surfaces including buildings
4. Washing vehicles except with a hand-held hose with shut-off nozzle for quick rinses
5. Charity car washes
6. Bulk sale of water other than potable consumption and sanitation

Gillespie County, Texas – Stage 3 - source: Hill Country Underwater Conservation District www.hcuwcd.org

Landscape watering:

1. Outdoor water use reduction of 15% of average daily water demands from all permitted municipal, industrial and private wells by allowing outdoor water use only twice a week.
2. Domestic wells for household use and wells permitted for irrigation of crops are exempt, although homeowners are encouraged to follow a twice weekly landscape watering schedule.
3. The 15% reduction applies to “Non-Essential” water use which includes washing of motor vehicles, washing hard surfaces including buildings, flushing gutters, filling pools, and filling fountains, ponds and stock tanks for aesthetic purposes.

Prohibited water use:

1. Moratorium on all new permitted wells in the Ellenberger aquifer in Gillespie County. This includes irrigation, municipal and commercial wells. It does not include replacement wells for domestic or livestock use.
2. Filling stock tanks in excess of 50,000 gallons is prohibited

Kerr County, Texas – Stage 2 - source: Headwaters Groundwater Conservation District www.hgcd.org

Landscape watering:

1. Permitted wells that service public water systems or are used for agricultural, industrial or non-domestic purposes are required to reduce water production by 20%
2. Irrigation of landscape (including parks and golf courses) limited to 8 pm to 10 am
3. Hand-held hoses, buckets or drip irrigation only
4. Athletic fields abide by the same watering hours but can use irrigation systems
5. Private wells are non-permitted and are not included in the restrictions; however, private well owners are encouraged to reduce water production

Prohibited water use:

1. Use of automatic sprinkler systems and hose-end sprinklers
2. Washing down any hard surfaces or buildings
3. Failure to repair a controllable leak within a reasonable time
4. Pumping groundwater into ponds or other water features for aesthetic purposes
5. Washing any motor vehicle other than at a commercial wash facility

Kerr County, Texas - A Private Well Owner’s Perspective – source: June, a Hill Country Master Gardener

As private well owners, we are fortunate not to be on water rationing. Our well is 580 feet, drilled in the middle Trinity basin almost 10 years ago. We have our fingers crossed that we will have adequate water until we finally get sufficient rain. With that being said, we are aware of our water usage and have curtailed any waste. I do not have a veggie garden, and the deer have eaten my perennials, so outside water use is minimal. Only a dozen potted perennials that I keep protected from the deer are watered. The heart-sinking threat is that we will have no warning when it goes dry!

Kerrville, Texas - Stage 4 – source: City of Kerrville www.kerrville.org

Landscape watering:

1. Any day with a hand-held hose with shut-off nozzle, bucket or a drip irrigation system between the hours of 6 to 9 am and 7 to 11 pm

Prohibited water use:

1. Hose-end sprinklers, automatic irrigation and soaker hoses
2. Ornamental water features (fountains, ponds)
3. Washing hard-surfaced areas and buildings
4. Washing vehicles other than at a commercial wash facility
5. Dust control

Additional restrictions:

1. No permits for new, additional or expanded water service shall be granted
2. No fires or cooking equipment allowed in any city parks
3. Suspension of fall outdoor sports leagues and sports field rentals due to prohibited sports field water use

Rio Frio, Texas – source: Don, a Hill Country Master Gardener

The Real Water Supply Corporation (RWSC) is a small Co-Op type company that supplies water to its members of Frio River Place and River Tree subdivisions in Rio Frio, TX. It has three shallow wells with its own rules and regulations. The co-op follows the drought recommendations of the Real-Edwards Conservation and Reclamation District (RECRD).

In April, 2011 when RECRD announced extreme drought conditions, the Real Water Supply Corporation (RWSC) declared Stage IV drought conditions, imposing many restrictions on outdoor water use similar to surrounding communities.

On July 21, 2011, RWSC implemented **Stage V** water restrictions and **Service Capacity Rationing Restrictions** for Frio River Place and River Tree subdivisions when one of its three wells began “sucking air”.

Restrictions:

1. All outside water use (supplied by RWSC) is prohibited
2. Violations are subject to water disconnect
3. Permanent residents are rationed to 2000 gallons per month (2-person occupancy) plus 500 gallons per month for each additional person living onsite
4. Non-permanent residents are rationed at 1250 gallons per month

Within one month of rationing, water usage was cut in half and the wells have stabilized.

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“I moved here from a place where getting *rid* of water was my gardening problem. Long-time residents of the Texas Hill Country tell me to get used to this.... dry years occur too often to remember. The 3.30” of rain recorded in my neighborhood since January 1, 2011 has made me re-think everything about my garden.”

Vickie, Hill Country Master Gardener, Kerrville TX
September 15, 2011