

Drought

Information on weather-ready landscapes



WHAT IS IT?

Drought is a deficiency of precipitation over an extended period of time—usually a season or more. From 2000 to 2016, portions of Nebraska had at least "abnormally dry" conditions in 93% of the drought monitor maps and 76% of maps had Nebraska in the "moderate drought" category.

Annual precipitation ranges from around 35" in SE Neb to less than 15" in NW Neb.

Average wettest month: June

Average wettest 3-month period: May, June, and July



May-July

40-50% annual precipitation falls

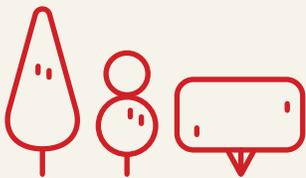
April-Sept.

75-80% annual precipitation falls

Annual precipitation coincides with the warmest temperatures, highest evaporation rates, and highest water use by vegetation.

PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS

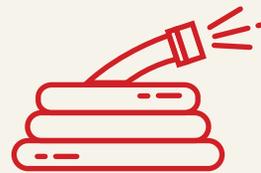
Preventing drought is much easier than correcting it.



- 1 Identify drought prone plants in your landscape.** Common specimens in Nebraska are arborvitae, white pine, and turf.



- 2 Mulch with wood chips** to avoid weed competition and to moderate soil temperature and moisture.



- 3 Water soils around plants thoroughly.** Use a soaker hose to apply water slowly and allow it to soak in. Cluster plant material with similar water requirements together.



- 4 Evaluate the plants' value in the landscape.** Consider watering only the highest landscape value plants if water restrictions are put in place. Trees and shrubs take much longer to establish if lost to drought. Perennials, vegetable gardens and turf are easier to replace if lost to drought.

TYPICAL DAMAGE

Exposed soil due to turf death



Droughts' impacts on some trees might not be fully recognized for a few years following drought. Lawns that did not receive enough moisture to keep the crowns alive should be overseeded to reestablish turf.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Recovery from drought is difficult and may take some time.



Examine bark, buds, stems to determine if tissues are dried out. Prune out desiccated and dried out portions of the tree/shrub.



Keep soil moist, not soggy or dry, for the growing season.



Avoid fertilization in first year after drought.



Mulch with wood chips to avoid weed competition and to moderate soil temperature and moisture. Avoid placement of mulch next to the trunk to prevent suffocation and wildlife damage.

For more information, visit weather-ready.unl.edu/landscapes