

Garden Line - June 2010

by Brent Moon - HPARD Urban Garden Manager

The first day of summer arrives on June 21, but summertime temperatures are already here. April and May were pretty dry months, and I hope this is a trend that doesn't continue. Here are some things to think about as we go into summer.



1. Work early and late in your lawn and garden, if possible. Relative humidity is higher at these times, but the temperatures are lower. If you do have to work outside in the hottest part of the day, be sure to wear sunscreen and a hat, drink plenty of water, and take frequent breaks.

2. Make sure your plants have a 3-4" layer of mulch over their root zone. Mulch has a threefold benefit. First, it greatly hinders weed germination around your plants. Second, it helps conserve moisture, keeping the soil more evenly moist than areas without mulch, thereby reducing moisture stress on plants. The third benefit of mulch is that it improves the soil as it breaks down into organic matter. Mulch, mulch, mulch!





3. Keep an eye on newly planted flowers, perennials, trees, and shrubs, especially those in pots. Potted plants may need to be watered twice a day during the hottest part of the summer. Unlike plants in the ground, they are totally dependent on the soil in their pot. Potted plants, especially those with large leaves, can lose more water through their leaves (a process called transpiration) quicker than it can be replenished by the roots, resulting in wilting. Any trees and shrubs planted last year may still need occasional watering this summer. It is best to water deeply, less often, rather than watering every day shallowly. This helps the plants to grow a more extensive root system.

Welcome to summer, and remember to work smart, stay cool, and enjoy being out in your garden!