

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

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Home repair advice read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Water matters



Daylilies bloom for a single day and are drought resistant.

By Cynthia Brian

"When the well is dry, we know the worth of water." ~ Benjamin Franklin

We turned on the spigot. A trickle. Seconds later, nothing.

For over 100 years the deep well had served three houses, several barns, and all the gardens on our Napa county ranch without a problem. This summer, the well is empty. The bucolic lake built by my Dad and brothers in the former horse pasture served as a family playground, fishing area, and



Crocosmia, the firecracker plant is not a water hog.

Photos Cynthia Brian

farm irrigation reservoir for decades. In 2021, it is a big basin of cracked clay. There is no water.

In the San Joaquin Valley, an area known to be the breadbasket of fruit and nuts for America, the aquifers and canals are depleted. It is projected that by 2040, 535,000 acres of agricultural production will be lost. If the drought persists and water is not available, double that amount of land will not be planted resulting in food shortages around the country.

Seventy-one percent of the earth is

covered in water. Over 96% of that water is saline, represented by our oceans and seas. The human body consists of 60% water. H₂O is a vital nutrient to the life of every cell. People can survive without food for several days, but without water, organ failure commences around the third day of dehydration.

Water matters and water is scarce. Climate change is resulting in rising temperatures and when the soil gets warmer, heat waves worsen. Fifty-five percent of the West is experiencing extreme drought conditions. Some scientists have declared the summer of 2021 the worst drought in over 1,200 years.

What is a gardener to do?

Because of the efforts to reduce water usage as well as the higher costs of water, many people have asked me if it would be best to "let their landscape go." My rapid reaction is a decisive "NO!" Besides the financial burden of re-landscaping, maintaining a garden during a drought is essential not only for the aesthetics and beauty a garden provides but for keeping your home cooler and contributing to a fire safety zone. If you let your plants and trees die, your parched landscape could become a fire hazard.

Here are ways to minimize watering while keeping your plants alive.

1. Weed your garden thoroughly as weeds are huge drinkers.
2. Mulch to conserve water. Add three inches of good quality mulch to your entire landscape to suffocate weed growth, conserve water, prevent evaporation, and reduce the heat to the soil.

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