

This brochure is made available through a specific grant from the Suffolk County Water Authority



prepared by



**Cornell University**  
Cooperative Extension  
of Suffolk County

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County  
423 Griffing Avenue, Suite 100  
Riverhead, NY 11901-3071

For gardening and soil testing information please call:  
631-727-4126 or 631-581-4223  
Email: [suffolk@cornell.edu](mailto:suffolk@cornell.edu)  
[www.cce.cornell.edu/suffolk](http://www.cce.cornell.edu/suffolk)

*Cornell Cooperative Extension in Suffolk County  
provides equal program and employment opportunities.*

Cornell Cooperative Extension is funded in part by Suffolk County through the office of Steve Levy, County Executive and the County Legislature.

# Waterwise Gardening

## Did you know?

Drinking water on Long Island comes from underground aquifers. The quality of this abundant supply must be protected. The waterwise gardening tips inside are ways to preserve the quality of our water resources.



## Watering basics

Healthy plants and lawns thrive on fewer, longer soakings for root development. Drip or soaker hoses are ideal for new flower borders, landscape plants, container and vegetable gardens. Manual watering targets the needs of specific plants. Although automatic sprinklers make lawn irrigation effortless, these can waste water if not properly monitored. Lawns need about an inch of water weekly. Adjust timers for longer periods once or twice a week during the growing season. Shallow, frequent irrigation leads to poor turf quality and to nutrient leaching. Take advantage of rainfall by switching off automatic systems until needed.

## Soil preparation

Improve soil structure by adding liberal amounts of organic matter such as compost or manure. Incorporate organic amendments 18" deep if possible in new beds or sprinkle on the surface of existing turf. Check pH and apply lime if required for plants to take advantage of nutrients already available in the soil. Mulch holds down soil temperature and reduces evaporation, thus conserving water. Mulch also insulates plant roots from summer heat and winter cold and helps control weeds that compete with plants for moisture.

Mulch also reduces evaporation and prevents erosion.



Warminster Broom -  
*Cytisus praecox* 'Allgold'

## Green, not greedy lawns

Make lawns sustainable. Mow 3 inches high. Leave clippings on lawn as a source of recycled nitrogen. Eliminate excess and shallow watering. The Suffolk County ban on any fertilizer applied between November 1 and April 1 is a measure to reduce nitrogen leaching into ground and surface water. Exercise care. Apply no more than 1 lb. of nitrogen/1,000 square feet of lawn per application. Most home lawns on Long Island require no more than 2-3 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year. This will have minimal impact on the environment and water quality, and still will provide sufficient nitrogen to preserve turf density. Avoid other potential contaminants such as weed killers, herbicides and pesticides. Consider organic products.

## Right plants, right places

Sun exposure, shade, and drainage should be considered when selecting plant material for a landscape. Group plants with similar water habits. Drought tolerant species include many attractive alternatives. Any plant that makes it through a ten-day rainless period with no signs of outward stress would be considered to be drought tolerant in the Northeast.



Madagascar periwinkle -  
*Catharanthus* 'Pretty in Rose'

Native varieties are ideal choices for Long Island. The plant lists in this brochure identify shrubs, trees, perennials and annuals well suited for a waterwise garden.

The plants below are ornamentals with drought-tolerant attributes recommended as landscape plants for Long Island. They are fine additions to a waterwise garden.

## Trees

American holly - *Ilex opaca*  
Box Elder - *Acer negundo*  
Eastern Red Cedar - *Juniperus virginiana*  
Ginkgo Tree - *Ginkgo biloba*  
Goldenrain Tree - *Koelreuteria paniculata*  
Hawthorn - *Crataegus viridis* 'Winter King'  
Hedge Maple - *Acer campestre*  
Honey Locust - *Gleditsia triacanthos*  
Japanese Zelkova - *Zelkova serrata*  
Osage orange - *Maclura pomifera*  
Pitch Pine - *Pinus rigida*

## Shrubs

Bearberry - *Arctostaphylos urva-ursi*  
Butterfly Bush - *Buddleia davidii* 'Nanho Purple'  
Chaste Tree - *Vitex* 'Silver Spire'  
Crimson Pygmy Barberry - *B.thunbergii* 'Crimson Pygmy'  
Hollywood Juniper - *Juniperus chinensis* 'Torulosa'  
Kerria - *Kerria Japonica*  
Nannyberry - *Viburnum lentago*  
Quince - *Chaenomeles speciosa*  
Rose-of-Sharon - *Hibiscus syriacus* 'Diana'  
Siberian Pea Shrub - *Caragana arborescens*  
Smoke Tree - *Cotinus coggygia* 'Royal Purple'  
Tamarix - *Tamarix ramosissima* 'Summer Glow'  
Warminster Broom - *Cytisus praecox* 'Allgold'  
Winterberry - *Ilex verticillata*

## Herbaceous Perennials

Beebalm - *Monarda didyma*  
Butterfly weed - *Asclepia tuberosa*  
Coreopsis - *Coreopsis verticillate* 'Moonbeam'  
Daylily - *Hemerocallis* sp. & var.  
False Indigo - *Baptisia australis*  
Blanket Flower - *Gaillardia puchella*  
Goldenrod - *Solidago x hybrida* 'Crown of Rays'  
Lamb's ears - *Stachys byzantina*  
Lavender - *Lavendula* 'Hidcote Blue'  
Montauk Daisy - *Chrysanthemum pacificum*  
New England Aster - *AsterNovae-angliae*  
Purple Coneflower - *Echinacea purpurea*  
Russian Sage - *Pervoskia atriplicifolia*  
Stonecrop - *Sedum spectabile* 'Autumn Joy'  
Yarrow - *Achillea* 'The pearl,' 'Summer Pastels'  
Yucca - *Yucca filamentosa* 'Gold Sword'

## Annuals

Cleome - *Cleome* spp.  
Creeping Zinnia - *Sanvitalia procumbens*  
Dusty Miller - *Cineraria* spp.  
Gazania - *Gazania* sp.  
Gomphrena - 'Strawberry Fields,' 'Gnome White'  
Lantana  
Madagascar periwinkle - *Catharanthus* sp.  
Melampodium - *Melampodium* 'Medallion'  
Mexican Sunflower - *Tithonia* 'Sundance'  
Nasturtium  
Portulaca  
Swan River Daisy - *Brachycome*  
Sweet Alyssum - 'Wonderland Pastel Pink'