



## DROUGHT-TOLERANT PLANTS

### Tough Plants

Whether in shade or sun, plants in the city need to be tough. Streetscapes are hard places for plants to flourish: With so much sidewalk and asphalt absorbing heat and bouncing it back to the plants, urban gardens are often terribly hot. Plus, you're a busy person—who has *time* to fuss over flowers? This all means you need heavyweight plants that thrive with **little care** and **less water**. It also means you need to get smart about **how** and **when** you water.

### Watering Techniques

The **time of day** you choose to water makes a big difference. Water in the morning (between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m.), when the air is still cool and the sun is low. Less water will evaporate into the air, so more water will get to your plants. If you water in the afternoon, a lot of the water from your hose will evaporate into the air before ever reaching your plants; if you water in the evening, moisture will remain on the leaves and soil all night and could cause mildew, mold, and rot.

The **amount of time** you spend watering is also important. Water for a longer time, less often: Instead of splashing water on plants for a few minutes every day, water “deeply” as needed. If possible, install a drip-irrigation system so water goes directly to plants. Soon you will learn to spot a plant and water it *just before* it goes into “water stress”—that limp state as sad as the old carrots in the back of the refrigerator.

You'll save a lot of time and water by putting a layer of **mulch** (1–3 inches) on top of your garden soil. Keep the mulch away from the very base of the plants, though, to prevent rot. Mulch packs a wallop: It cuts down on water-thirsty weeds, keeps the soil cool and moist, and as it decomposes, mulch makes a wonderful addition to your soil—compost. Adding compost to your soil helps improve its water-holding capacity, among other great things.

### Water Zones

Group plants according to their water needs. Water-guzzling plants should be grouped together in their own thirsty zone or area instead of mixed in with drought-tolerant plants. This will ensure that each plant gets the right amount of water without waste. Put thirsty plants near the water source to make watering easier.

**BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN, 1000 Washington Ave, Brooklyn, New York 11225**

Have questions on specifics?

Give GreenBridge, the community horticulture program at BBG, a call! 718-623-7209/7250

## Choosing Plants

How do you know if a plant likes it dry? Use the handy list below, or take a clue from the plant's **leaf shape, texture, and color**: Small or finely cut leaves, leaves that feel downy, fleshy, or leathery, and leaves that are gray or silver in color are common among water-wise plants. Spring-flowering bulbs (try grape hyacinths and daffodils) are quite drought tolerant as well. The list below is just a sampling of plants that like it hot and dry—you'll find many more. Remember, even the most drought-tolerant plant needs regular watering until established.

### Plants for DRY, SUNNY Sites

Annuals		Herbaceous Perennials	
Latin Name	Common Name	Latin Name	Common Name
<i>Cosmos</i> spp.	Cosmos	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
<i>Gomphrena globosa</i>	Globe amaranth	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly weed
<i>Helianthus annuus</i>	Sunflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Cone flower
<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>	Lantana	<i>Gaillardia grandiflora</i>	Blanket flower
<i>Portulaca grandiflora</i>	Moss rose	<i>Gaura lindheimeri</i>	Gaura, wand flower
<i>Senecio cineraria</i>	Dusty miller	<i>Hemerocallis</i> spp.	Daylilies
<i>Tagetes</i> spp.	Marigolds	<i>Oenothera</i> spp.	Sun drops
<i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i>	Mexican sunflower	<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>	Russian sage
<i>Zinnia angustifolia</i>	Creeping zinnia	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-eyed Susan
<i>Verbena</i> spp.	Verbenas	<i>Sedum</i> spp.	Stonecrop, sedum

### Plants for DRY, SHADY Sites

Annuals		Herbaceous Perennials	
Latin Name	Common Name	Latin Name	Common Name
<i>Begonia</i> × <i>semperflorens</i>	Wax begonia	<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Bugleweed
<i>Lunaria annua</i> (biennial)	Money plant	<i>Alchemilla mollis</i>	Lady's mantle
<i>Viola</i> × <i>wittrockiana</i>	Pansy	<i>Bergenia cordifolia</i>	Bergenia
		<i>Corydalis lutea</i>	Corydalis
		<i>Epimedium</i> spp.	Barrenworts
		<i>Heuchera</i> spp.	Coral bells
		<i>Hosta</i> spp.	Hostas
		<i>Lamium galeobdolon</i>	Yellow archangel
		<i>Liriope</i> spp.	Lilyturfs
		<i>Vinca minor</i>	Creeping myrtle

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