



Suffering Dogwoods Need Water in Georgia Summer

When summer heat and lack of rain coincide, Dogwood trees may look out of place. Their dehydrated state has them confused as their leaves take on the look of fall.

University of Georgia horticulturists say dogwoods are one of the first landscape trees to suffer when conditions border on drought.

Wilting leaves is the first sign your dogwoods are suffering. Brown, scorched leaves are sure signs of severe drought damage.

Drought-damaged dogwoods will develop leaf scorch, which starts as a brown band around the outside of the leaves. The cells on the outside of the leaves begin to die, and this turns the leaf edges brown. The leaves will eventually turn totally brown if the tree continues to go without ample water.

To keep your dogwoods from developing leaf scorch, begin watering them at the first sign of wilting. UGA experts say early-morning is the most efficient watering time. Watering in the heat of the day will result in water lost to evaporation.

Water dogwoods at ground level from the base of the tree out to the edge of the canopy or drip-line. It's best to use a soaker hose around the drip line. This allows the water to be absorbed by the ground rather than run off.

A good watering of one inch once a week should be plenty for most parts of Georgia. However, sandy soils may require watering more often.

A dogwood's native habitat is the forest, but homeowners have moved them into full sunlight in their landscapes. Dogwoods are understory trees and grow best in the shade.

Thinking of adding dogwoods to your landscape? UGA horticulturists say planting them in the shade and at least four to six feet away from other landscape plants and trees. And keep the base of the tree clear of vegetation.

Add two to three inches of organic mulch, such as pine straw or pine bark nuggets, to help the tree perform. Don't use rock mulches around trees and plants, as they absorb heat.

Consider trying the kousa or Chinese dogwood when adding new dogwoods to your landscape. They're a bit tougher than the native dogwoods, and they maintain green foliage better.

Source:

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