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## **Drought Tolerant Plants for New Hampshire Landscapes [fact sheet]**

January 1, 2018

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Rainfall patterns can be highly variable in New England. Periods of above-normal precipitation may be followed by weeks with little or none. While many established trees and shrubs can tolerate two weeks or even longer without water, they may show signs of reduced growth, nutrient deficiencies, and/or increased susceptibility to certain pests and diseases during a prolonged drought. New plants need frequent watering for several weeks or even months (for large shrubs/trees) to establish their roots in the surrounding soil. Even short periods of hot, dry weather can threaten the health and survival of newly planted trees and shrubs, vines and perennials. Annual flowers (bedding plants) generally suffer first from drought because of their limited root systems.

Homeowners and landscapers who want to minimize irrigation needs or who live in areas with potential water restrictions should select plants which can tolerate drought. This does not mean xeriscaping, which is more appropriate for arid environments such as the Southwest. Many xeric plants cannot stand the wet conditions that are likely to occur during part of our growing season. Instead, choose plants that can withstand New Hampshire's variable climatic conditions, not just occasional drought.

To get the right plant for your site, consider other characteristics in addition to drought-tolerance. Good soil drainage is especially important for many drought-tolerant species to thrive. Sun and shade patterns, soil characteristics, and wind exposure, as well as mature size and shape, insect or disease susceptibility, and aesthetics are all important factors in selecting appropriate plant material. Evergreen plants generally need less water than deciduous trees and shrubs during the growing season, but more during the off-season. Broad-leaved evergreens such as rhododendrons and mountain laurel, although not considered drought-tolerant, grow best in partial shade which offers some protection from dehydration. Needled evergreens (conifers) as a group have the lowest water requirements.

Keep in mind that even drought-tolerant plants need ample water initially to encourage root establishment. Once established, in most years they require little or no water other than natural rainfall. When no rain occurs for a period of two weeks or more during the growing season, check on shrubs, trees and perennials and water the root zone thoroughly if they are showing signs of wilting or stress. Check annual flowers daily.

This list of drought-tolerant plants was compiled using several references, along with our own experiences where possible. The plants included here are cold hardy to zone 3 or 4 and are generally considered to be desirable landscape plants (not weedy, invasive, brittle, or especially pest-prone), but these criteria are always changing. Consult the references for the most current common and scientific names and any concerns about potential invasiveness. Most of the listed plants should be available at local garden centers and nurseries.

## Deciduous Trees

Burr Oak	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>
Common Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>
Crabapple	<i>Malus spp.</i> (some)
Gray Birch	<i>Betula populifolia</i>
Honey Locust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>
Hop Hornbeam	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>
Japanese Tree Lilac	<i>Syringa reticulata</i>
Japanese Zelkova	<i>Zelkova serrata</i>
Kentucky Coffee Tree	<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>
Maidenhair Tree	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>
Northern Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>
Winter King Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus viridis</i> ‘Winter King’

## Deciduous Shrubs

Common Lilac	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>
Beach Rose	<i>Rosa rugosa</i>
Flowering Quince	<i>Chaenomeles speciosa</i>

Forsythia	<i>Forsythia suspensa</i>
Fragrant Sumac	<i>Rhus aromatica</i>
Sweet Pepperbush	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>
Ninebark	<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>
Shrubby Cinquefoil	<i>Dasiphora floribunda</i>
Shrubby St. John's-wort	<i>Hypericum prolificum</i>
Siberian Pea Shrub	<i>Caragana arborescens</i>
Small Bayberry	<i>Morella caroliniensis</i>
Sweetfern	<i>Comptonia peregrina</i>
Spreading Cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster divaricatus</i>
Staghorn Sumac	<i>Rhus hirta</i>

## Evergreen Trees and Shrubs

Austrian Pine	<i>Pinus nigra</i>
Chinese Juniper	<i>Juniperus chinensis</i>
Common Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>
Eastern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>
Pitch Pine	<i>Pinus rigida</i>
Scotch Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
White fir	<i>Abies concolor</i>

White Spruce	<i>Picea glauca</i>
Yew	<i>Taxus x media</i>

## Ground Covers and Vines

Kinnikinnick	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>
Creeping Juniper	<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i>
Japanese Garden Juniper	<i>Juniperus procumbens</i>
Partridgeberry	<i>Mitchella repens</i>
Virginia Creeper	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>

## Perennials

Adam's Needle	<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>
Barrenwort	<i>Epimedium spp.</i>
Barren Strawberry	<i>Waldsteinia ternata</i>
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>
Blanket Flower	<i>Gaillardia aristata</i>
Blue Wild Indigo	<i>Baptisia australis</i>
Butterfly Milkweed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>
Candytuft	<i>Iberis sempervirens</i>
Catnip	<i>Nepeta cataria</i>
Cranesbill	<i>Geranium spp.</i>

Daylily	<i>Hemerocallis hybrids</i>
Garden thyme	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>
Globe Thistle	<i>Echinops ritro</i>
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago species</i>
Hens-and-chickens	<i>Sempervivum tectorum</i>
Hosta	<i>Hosta plantaginea</i>
Lamb's Ears	<i>Stachys byzantina</i>
Lavender	<i>Lavendula angustifolia</i>
Moss Phlox	<i>Phlox subulata</i>
Pale Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea pallida</i>
Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>
Russian Sage	<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>
Spotted Dead Nettle	<i>Lamium maculatum</i>
Spurge	<i>Euphorbia spp.</i>
Stonecrop	<i>Sedum spp.</i>
Wand Flower	<i>Gaura lindheimeri</i>
Woodland Sage	<i>Salvia nemerosa</i>
Wood Sage	<i>Salvia x sylvestris</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea spp.</i>

## Annuals

Cosmos	<i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i>
Creeping Zinnia	<i>Sanvitalia procumbens</i>
Dusty Miller	<i>Senecio cineraria</i>
Garden Verbena	<i>Verbena hybrida</i>
Globe Amaranth	<i>Gomphrena globosa</i>
Lantana	<i>Lantana hybrids</i>
Mexican Sunflower	<i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i>
Morning-Glory	<i>Ipomoea purpurea</i>
Moss Rose	<i>Portulaca grandiflora</i>
Nasturtium	<i>Tropaeolum majus</i>
Spider Flower	<i>Cleome hassleriana</i>
Strawflower	<i>Helichrysum bracteatum</i>
Treasure Flower	<i>Gazania rigens</i>
Wax Begonia	<i>Begonia semperflorens</i>

## Ornamental Grasses, Ferns and Sedges

Blue green sedge	<i>Carex flaca</i>
Purple love grass	<i>Erigerostis spectabilis</i>
Blue Fescue	<i>Festuca cinerea</i>

Switch grass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>
Christmas fern	<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>
Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>
Prairie Dropseed	<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>

## References

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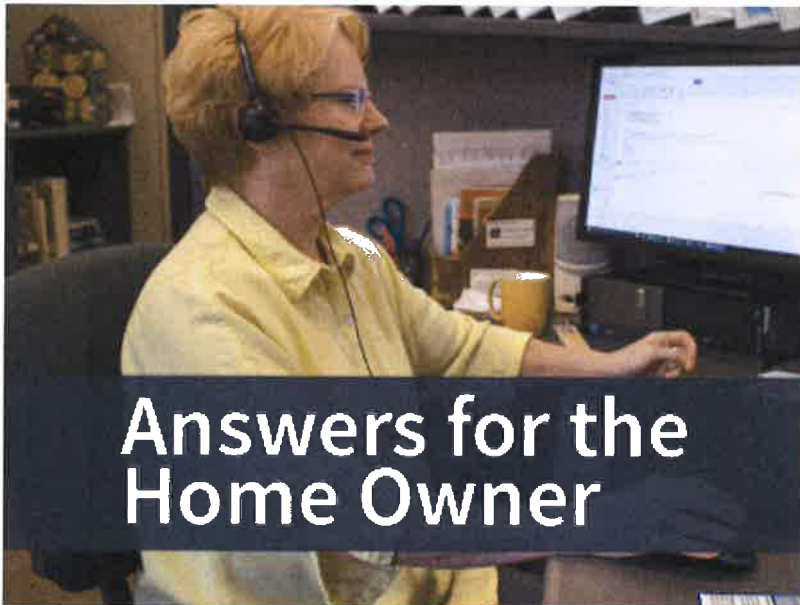
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