

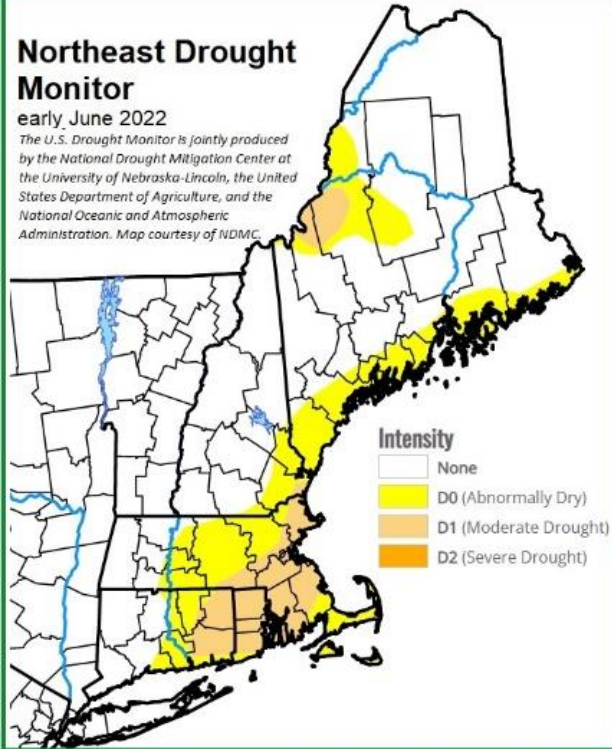
# Garden Club Horticultural Hints June 2022

It's finally summer! Now, how about some rain?

## Northeast Drought Monitor

early June 2022

The U.S. Drought Monitor is jointly produced by the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Map courtesy of NDMC.



**This has been the driest New England spring in a number of years.** Usually, we get a lot of rain in the spring; it's vital for all the trees and shrubs and perennials as they emerge from winter and send out flowers and leaves. This year we received virtually none. With the lack of rain, town watering restrictions have been issued earlier and with stricter rules. The Drought Monitor shows you where we are at the beginning of June. Two months ago, no part of the region was even 'abnormally dry'.

**So, don't even think about using sprinklers** which can lose half the water they put out to evaporation. Trees and shrubs are costly to replace and take a long time to grow to size. To maximize water where it is needed, irrigate new trees with drip bags or by direct hand watering into the tree basin. Perennials are your next priority—they will tell you when they need water by drooping early or late in the day (Drooping in the middle of the day only means the roots can't keep up with the heat—not that the plant is under serious stress.)



*Water as close to ground level as possible to get water where it's needed*

**Hand watering** is the way to take care of your flower and vegetable gardens. Water early in the day to prevent diseases from taking advantage of the wet leaves. And, pick vegetables and flowers when the leaves are dry to avoid spreading any diseases that may have found their way onto your plants.

**Herb advice.** Herb flavors are strongest early in the day, so do your harvest then and refrigerate until you are ready to use them. Pinch back the tops of annual herbs to promote bushier growth, and always cut or pinch off any flowers the herb produces – you want the herb's leaves – because once the flower is pollinated, the plant 'thinks' its work is done.



*Use 'tree gators' or watering bags to put water where it is needed for newly planted trees and shrubs*



**Give your houseplants a summer vacation.** A

covered porch is perfect because houseplants generally aren't used to direct sun. Don't place them on the ground where they'll pick up hitchhiking insects and soil-borne diseases. Remember also, they'll require more frequent watering.

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*Plant pollinator-attracting plants with your vegetables. Photo credit - NC State University*

**Increase your vegetable production** by tucking in native flowers such as monarda (bee balm) and echinacea (cone flowers) into the corners of your vegetable garden. Those native flowers will attract the pollinators you need for a successful crop, make your garden pretty to look at, and give the native pollinators - bees and butterflies - a welcome feeding station.

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**Parsley and dill are food for swallowtail caterpillars** and so attract swallowtail butterflies.

Add few extra 'sacrificial' plants in your flower garden or near your house to enjoy these beautiful creatures and applaud the young caterpillars as they chew through them.

**Stop any lawn treatments** during the heat of summer. Move the mower blade to its highest setting; preferably three inches. At that height the grass can shade out most weeds and also keep its roots cooler during the hottest days. Lawns do not need to be watered, they can survive periods of dryness, recovering naturally when rain returns. A brown lawn is the sign of a conscientious gardener this year.

*Written and created by Betty Sanders. For more horticultural suggestions for June and throughout the year, please visit [www.BettyOnGardening.com](http://www.BettyOnGardening.com)*