

# Drought

Information on weather-ready landscapes

## WHAT IS IT?

**Drought is a deficiency of precipitation over an extended period of time—usually a season or more.** From 2000 to 2016, portions of Nebraska had at least “abnormally dry” conditions in 93% of the drought monitor maps and 76% of maps had Nebraska in the “moderate drought” category.



Annual precipitation coincides with the warmest temperatures, highest evaporation rates, and highest water use by vegetation.

**Annual precipitation ranges from around 35” in SE Neb. to less than 15” in NW Neb.**

○ **Average Wettest Month:** June

○ **Average wettest 3-month period:** May, June, and July

**May-July**

○ **40-50%** annual precipitation falls

**April-Sept**

○ **75-80%** annual precipitation falls

Source: Applied Climate Information Services

## PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS

Preventing drought is much easier than correcting it.



**1**

**Identify drought prone plants in your landscape.** Common specimens in Nebraska are arborvitae, white pine, and turf.



**2**

**Mulch with wood chips** to avoid weed competition and to moderate soil temperature and moisture.



**3**

**Water soils around plants** thoroughly. Use a soaker hose to apply water slowly and allow it to soak in. Cluster plant material with similar water requirements together



**4**

**Evaluate the plants' value in the landscape.** Consider watering only the highest landscape value plants if water restrictions are put in place. Trees and shrubs take much longer to establish if lost to drought. Perennials, vegetable gardens and turf are easier to replace if lost to drought.

## TYPICAL DAMAGE



Droughts' impacts on some trees might not be fully recognized for a few years following drought. Lawns that did not receive enough moisture to keep the crowns alive should be overseeded to reestablish turf.

Exposed soil due to turf death

## CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Recovery from drought is difficult and may take some time.



**Examine bark, buds, stems** to determine if tissues are dried out. Prune out desiccated and dried out portions of the tree/shrub.



**Keep soil moist**, not soggy or dry, for the growing season.



**Avoid fertilization** in first year after drought.



**Mulch with wood chips** to avoid weed competition and to moderate soil temperature and moisture. Avoid placement of mulch next to the trunk to prevent suffocation and wildlife damage.

For more information, visit [weather-ready.unl.edu/landscapes](http://weather-ready.unl.edu/landscapes)