

AUGUST, THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

By Randy Zellers-Director of Operations, SDL

We recently received a little bit of monsoon rains in the Valley that helps our landscapes tremendously. The nitrogen rich rainfall helps everything green up and saves us from running the irrigation systems for a couple of days. For every 0.25" of rain we receive, you should be able to shut your irrigation system down for 2-3 days at your home. Every landscape scenario is different, but, in general, this has been proven to be a life saver for water usage during the month of August, so take advantage of it!

The higher humidity of the monsoon season has a beneficial effect on your landscapes as well. All living entities within the landscape will lose less moisture through evapotranspiration during the month of August. Bermuda turf should look its' best during this month with the added nitrogen from rains. Reduce run times and days to take advantage of Mother Natures' gift. Keep in mind that August should be the last time you fertilize your turf prior to preparing for overseeding with rye in late September or early October. If you fertilize turf in September, you'll only have more lush Bermuda turf to scalp later in the month. Work with Mother Nature and not against the normal trends of the seasons. Understanding each season is key to saving water, labor and money in your landscapes.

Trees and shrubs have been suffering throughout the early summer and are in survival mode until the monsoon season gives them a much-needed break of high temperatures and low humidity. You'll find less leaf drop and more flushing of new growth occurring on your trees and shrubs during this time of year. Unless shrubs or trees are causing sight visibility issues, refrain from trimming them currently. Most species have been stressed for months and it is better to wait for any pruning until the temperatures cool down in October or November. Most native species of trees and shrubs go into a less active growth period during this time of year, and some will even go into complete dormancy in the winter.

People suffer during these times as well. Plan your day accordingly and get the more difficult outside tasks completed early morning or later in the day as the sun goes down. Stay hydrated and seek shade often during your morning or evening walks. Take a bottle of water with you and shorten your route as needed to eliminate any issues you may encounter with the oppressive heat and humidity. Evening storms are likely this time of year as you'll see clouds forming in the late afternoon that may turn into lightning and heavy rains in the early to late evening. Be careful on evening walks and avoid shelter under trees during a storm as limbs may break and fall during heavy winds.

October through March are the Chamber of Commerce months in the Valley and we're almost there, so congratulations, we've made it through another Arizona summer safe and sound.