

Key Drought Messages for Water Providers

- **Align your water restrictions with industry Best Management Practices (BMPs)**
 - GreenCO's Best Management Practices, developed in cooperation with Colorado State University, Denver Water, Northern Water Conservancy District, the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Wright Water Engineers, several other water utilities, and experts in our industry, have become the standard for outdoor water use and management via the Colorado Water Conservation Board, state law on new homes, and the Governor's office of Energy Management.
 - Water conservation achieved through BMPs is based on science.
- **Landscapes can survive using less water** - Discourage people from abandoning their landscape or landscaping in 2013. With good planting practices, we can train plants to use less water and still be healthy and vigorous. Our BMPs demonstrate that a beautiful healthy landscape and wise conservation are not mutually exclusive. Landscapes actually help conserve water by cooling the air.
- **Water conservation is not only achieved by watering two days a week – Please advocate and encourage the following measures:**
 - Use rain sensors and 'smart' irrigation controllers
 - Water plants correctly using right technologies – drip irrigation, microspray, pop-up sprays and rotors.
 - Water should be hitting the landscape and not streets or sidewalks.
 - Healthy soil is key to a sustainable landscape. Properly amended soils soaks up water and prevents water run-off; mulch also prevents moisture loss.
 - Cities and municipalities should require soil amendment and inspect it, that is the first step in soil health and moisture.
- **Encourage people to protect the urban forests** - Mature trees are impossible to replace and have immeasurable environmental benefits. People need information on how to keep trees alive in drought. (Note: The nonprofit conservation organization American Forests had declared Denver as one of the [ten best cities for urban forests](#).)
- **The economic impacts of drought are felt by everyone:** water providers, property owners and the green industry. Keeping landscapes alive and maintaining property values should be a priority for policy makers.
- **Telling customers to focus only on outdoor watering is not balanced, fair or effective** – Indoor water consumption happens everyday for 12 months versus 6/7 months for outdoor water use. You tell us we **saved more water outdoors than was saved indoors**. The green industry is proud to be part of the outdoor solution, but indoor conservation is equally important.

- **Sod/seed moratoriums should be avoided** – There is no data that demonstrates banning seed and sod saves significant water. It takes 21 days to establish sod and 30 to establish turf from seed. Research shows that the better maintained a lawn is, the more carbon it stores.
- **Encourage customers to watch their water consumption and adjust.** Ten years ago, it was often quite difficult to see consumption on a regular basis. Many water providers were billing once a month or even once every two months. Now, in many locations, it's possible to see consumption much faster, which allows for better and quicker adjustment of irrigation systems. Having landscape pros help consumers and HOAs by regularly reviewing water bills and changing water schedules has made a big difference in consumption.

Let the industry help.

- **Let us be your subject matter experts and education partners on outdoor water conservation outreach. Let us help you! We know the most about plants and are willing to share content with you.**
 - GreenCO will generate a lot of education content this year on how home/property owners can protect their investment in plants.
 - GreenCO can provide you content for newsletters, Facebook, emails, website, etc.

