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SPRING PLANTING TIPS FOR FUN IN THE SUN

- Helpful hints for Georgians to get waterSmart and conserve water-

ATLANTA (March 17, 2007) – The season for spring planting has arrived, and although March is traditionally a wet month for Georgia, the state is still in a drought. To help Georgians choose their spring and summer foliage wisely, the statewide waterSmart program would like to offer spring planting tips to homeowners who want to take advantage of the beautiful spring weather to get in the garden and make them waterSmart.

With warmer temperatures and longer daylight hours, this is the perfect time of year for Georgians to plant a garden that will last for the entire year. Plant selection and the layout of one's lawn or garden can determine the amount of maintenance and watering it requires. And with about 60 percent of all household water being used outdoors over the summer months, waterSmart spring planting can help Georgians beat the drought and save their lawns.

Here are some great waterSmart spring planting tips to help create and maintain a beautiful garden that requires less maintenance and conserves water:

- **Watering** – Water only once a week in the absence of rain to provide your lawn with enough water. Be sure to soak plants by aiming the nozzle at the base of plants instead of sprinkling them with water so that more water will reach the roots.
- **When to Water** - Avoid watering in the heat of the day (between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.) to conserve water and prevent evaporation. Turf areas need one inch of water once every seven to 10 days.
- **Check the Weather** – Turn off sprinkler systems when it is raining or install an inexpensive rain sensor shut-off switch to do it for you!
- **Mulch** – Using pine straw, bark chips or ground hardwood mulch around the base of plants and trees helps the soil to retain moisture by preventing evaporation.

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- **Shade** – Use shade in your garden to help make temperatures 20 degrees cooler than a landscape in full sun, which will help preserve moisture. Arbors, trellis and fences with vine covers can be effective sources of shade.
- **Planting / Plant selection** – When planting trees and shrubs, dig holes at least two times wider than the root ball to encourage roots to grow outward. Read the label and plant “like” plants together and chose plants that will thrive in the local environment. Try to select plants that are drought-tolerant and require less watering.

“It’s important for Georgians to use drought-tolerant plants for their gardens so that they decrease the amount of water they are using and can ultimately enjoy their beautiful garden,” says Bruce Holliday, senior landscape architect and special projects director of Pike Family Nursery.

“The waterSmart campaign encourages Georgians to conserve water outside during the spring months and throughout the year,” says Alice Miller Keyes, water conservation policy advisor to the Director of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. “By taking advantage of these spring planting tips, Georgians will not only have an attractive garden, but also the comfort in knowing they are saving water.”

For more information about spring planting or the waterSmart program, visit www.waterSmart.net or www.ConserveWaterGeorgia.net.

About waterSmart

The waterSmart program was developed in conjunction with the Georgia Water Wise Council and the Cobb County Cooperative Extension Service. It is endorsed by the Georgia Green Industry Association and the Georgia Turf Association, as well as numerous lawn and garden experts.

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