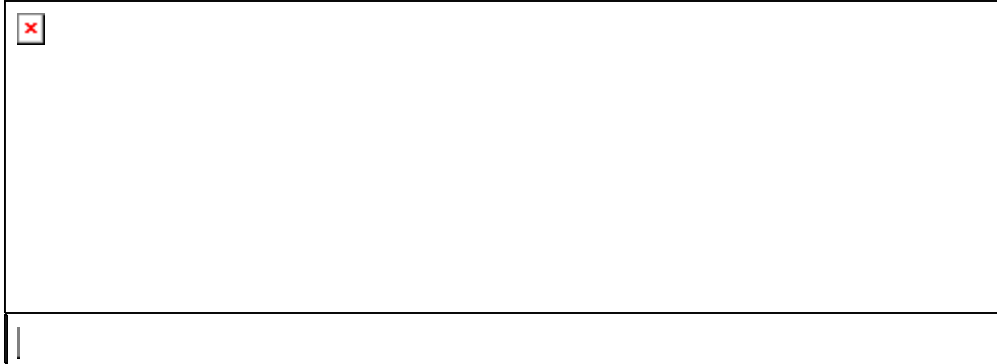


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### **Get Smart About Irrigation**

In honor of "Smart Irrigation Month", and since things are *usually* pretty parched this time of year, our mid-summer issue always focuses on water conservation. But given the historic rainfall we've had this summer (June 2009 was one of the wettest and coolest on record), many of us are enjoying the greenest lawns and gardens we've ever had, without even thinking about turning on the sprinklers.



So why then, are 49 [towns across Massachusetts currently imposing watering restrictions](#)? Because lots of us are still running the sprinklers even though our lawns may not need it or want it. Overwatering isn't healthy for your lawn or our water resources, and causes your grass more harm than good (see related articles below).

Even when Mother Nature is generous with rainfall, water is too important to waste. Keep on reading to learn more about smart irrigation, and visit the [Irrigation Chapter of the Greenscapes Guide](#). If you have an automatic irrigation system, you'll also find even more resources at the [Irrigation Association's website](#).

Here's to the greenest summer ever - in every sense of the word.

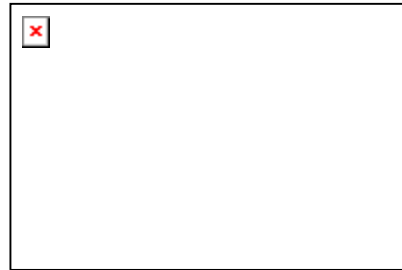
 **Tip of the Month: Do the Walk Test**

If the sun happens to be shining, don't assume you need to turn on the sprinklers! With all of the rain we've gotten this summer, your lawn may be happy with a bit of a dry spell. Rather than relying on the sun, a calendar or clock, let your feet "tell" you when your lawn needs a drink by doing the "Walk Test" – when you can clearly see your footprints in the lawn for several minutes after walking across it, the grass is thirsty. Watering at dawn is healthiest for your grass and conserves water by limiting evaporation. Be sure to comply with any [watering restrictions in your town](#). For more helpful information about watering, see the [Irrigation Chapter](#) of the Greenscapes Guide.

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 **Summer Yard Care Calendar**

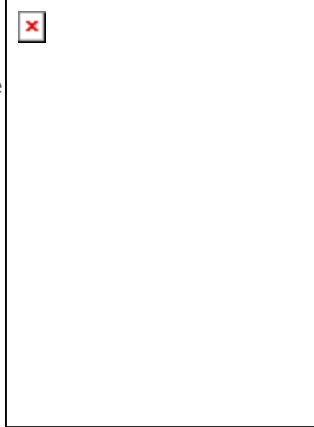
Here's a handy checklist to keep your Greenscape looking great through the summer! Follow the links to learn more about each recommendation. To see what's in store in the coming months, see the complete Greenscapes Lawn Care Calendar.



- Water lawn if the [Walk Test](#) shows your lawn is thirsty, but only if no [watering restrictions](#) in effect.
  - Redo [Shovel Test](#) around July 4th & mid-August
  - Conduct [Thumb Test](#) and sharpen mower blade at least every 10 hours of mowing
  - Leave clippings on the lawn for [free fertilizer](#)
  - [Treat weeds organically](#) or pull them by hand
  - Aerate and water [compost pile](#)
- 

 **Buy a New England Rain Barrel -- Support NSRWA and Greenscapes!**

Capture some free rainwater to use during the drier days that are sure to come! The [North and South Rivers Watershed Association](#) is hosting another sale of New England Rain Barrels this August. Place your order by **Friday August 7th** and get a New England Rain Barrel for \$79.95 (regularly priced at \$119.95). Pick up your barrel on Tuesday, August 11, between 4 and 7 p.m at NSRWA offices, 214 South St., Norwell ([directions](#)). \$7 of your purchase supports NSRWA and the Greenscapes South Shore program. To order, see <http://www.nerainbarrel.com/NSRWA.html> or call New England Rain Barrel at 877-977-3135.



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### **Give Soggy Lawns a Break!**

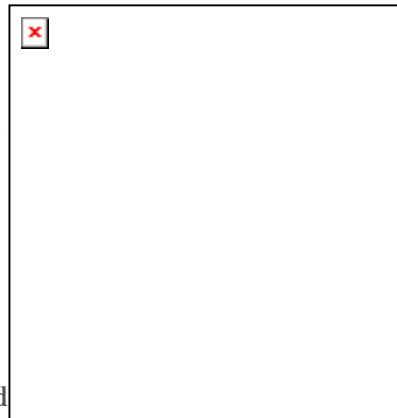
With all this rain, your lawn might be suffering in new ways than you'd usually expect in mid-summer. Here's a few tips to give your soggy lawn a break!

- **Play somewhere else.** Foot traffic on a wet lawn can damage the roots.
- **Mow another day.** In case you need a reason to procrastinate... a heavy mower can cause damaged roots, compacted soil, and clumped clippings that can clog your mower.
- **Watch out for fungus.** If there are yellow and brown patches on your grass, there could be a fungus among us. Bring a sample to a trusted local nursery (see our list of [Greenscapes Partner Garden Centers](#)) and ask for organic treatments if necessary.
- **Keep your blade sharp.** A dull blade will beat up your grass and make it even more susceptible to fungus and other disease, so be sure to sharpen it after every 10 hours of use.

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### **Native Plant of the Month: 'Ruby Star' Purple Coneflower** **(*Echinacea purpurea*)**

'[Ruby Star](#)' Purple Coneflower is an easy to grow plant that feeds butterflies and birds, and the beautiful blooms are great in fresh or dried floral arrangements. Large carmine red to purple flowers are 4" in diameter and bloom from June through August with some later blooms possible. The big, pincushion-like, dark bronze-brown central cones remain interesting through the winter, and continue to provide seeds to birds when they need them most. Looks great in beds with other cutting flowers, such as black-eyed susans and daisies.



This monthly feature of the Greenscapes E-News highlights a native plant that is particularly beautiful during this month and is also available at many of our [Partner Garden Centers](#). Consider adding this and other native plants to your Greenscape! This information is brought to you by [American Beauties](#), the native plant resource for the 2009 Greenscapes Massachusetts Program.

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