

TGR APRIL-JUNE 2025 RESOURCE



CONTROL YOUR CONTROLLER

Learning to properly set your irrigation controller is key to saving water this summer.

While the growing season is just beginning in South Texas, now is a great time to make sure your sprinkler system is running efficiently. Homes with automated irrigation systems can use about 50 percent more water outdoors than homes without irrigation systems. Your system can waste even more if it's programmed incorrectly, which is why getting control of your irrigation controller is so important this time of year.

"Whether a homeowner installs the latest smart controller or is still using the old one that came with the house they bought, they still need to get to know that controller," said Emily Green, Trinity Glen Rose District (TGR) programs manager. "Today's controller is the brain of an irrigation system. It can do simple tasks like turning valves on and off. New "smart controllers" can collect weather data and automatically calculate how long each station should run. But no matter the age or level of technology your system controller might have, setting it incorrectly is trouble. We've seen settings, like an inadvertent run time selection, that caused the waste of tens of thousands of gallons of water in a month. That's costly for the homeowner and for our local aquifers like the Trinity Aquifer the TGR District is charged with protecting."

In addition to incorrect settings on controllers that waste water, sometimes a homeowner will install low-water use plants in their landscape but forget to adjust the sprinkler heads to provide less water in those areas where less water is needed. The good news is that people are paying attention to San Antonio's movement to use more native plants that require less water to maintain. But the next critical step in this transition is to remove entire irrigation zones to make those plant choices pay off in permanent changes to the way a homeowner uses water.

In addition to using irrigation controller best practices, here are some other strategies for saving huge amounts of water this coming summer.



Ask your water provider if they provide an in-home water audit to help you with your sprinkler system.

Direct Sprinklers For Best Water Coverage. Any sprinklers that are spraying onto driveways, sidewalks, or walls should be turned toward the landscape. Also, make sure to properly direct sprinkler heads for uniform coverage to avoid creating dry spots in the landscape. Observe the distance of spray from one sprinkler to another. The spray from one sprinkler should reach the adjacent one (known as head-to-head coverage).

Use your Sprinkler System Controller in Manual Mode. While the automatic settings on a sprinkler controller can be very handy, if your system doesn't have rain sensors to turn off a system when it is raining, you can waste thousands of gallons of water in a couple of hours. Rain sensors do fail, so you have to check them during the watering season.

Maximize the rain we do get. Over the past few weeks and looking forward to the next few, the local area has received some rain showers. So when it rains a healthy amount, make sure you do not water your landscape for at least a week or more. It is ok to "miss" a watering day while current drought restrictions are in place.

Watch Go Gardening. For the past four years, the Trinity Glen Rose District and Gardening Volunteers of South Texas have been producing a monthly gardening show aptly called, [Go Gardening](#). This series helps people learn how to switch from water-guzzling turf grass landscapes to low water use, low maintenance colorful yards featuring Texas native plants.

"No matter how smart and easy sprinkler systems/controllers become to operate in the coming years, your water bill still depends on how well you actually use it. And, we would add that the aquifers that supply most of the water in the San Antonio area will continue to depend on the informed use as well."

For more water conservation ideas, go to the TGR ["Don't Waste the Wet Stuff"](#) website.

WATER-EFFICIENT PRODUCTS SALES TAX HOLIDAY HAPPENING MAY 24-25



The State of Texas is reminding families and businesses that they can save on the purchase of certain products during the state's Water-Efficient Products and ENERGY STAR® sales tax holidays.

"Older, inefficient appliances and outdated water systems can put a tremendous strain on power grids and water supplies. By taking advantage of these sales tax holidays, Texans can help alleviate those infrastructure pressures and lower their utility bills, and save money on state sales taxes.

During the Water-Efficient Products Sales Tax Holiday, products displaying a WaterSense® label or logo can be purchased tax free for personal or business use. These include shower heads, bathroom sink faucets and accessories, toilets, urinals and landscape irrigation controls.

The sales tax holiday also applies to lawn and garden products that help conserve water outdoors. Items qualifying for the exemption include soaker or drip-irrigation hoses; moisture controls for sprinkler or irrigation systems; mulch; and plants, trees and grasses. These items can be purchased tax free for residential use only.

There's no limit to the number of water-efficient or water-conserving products you can purchase tax free. For more information on the Water-Efficient Products Sales Tax Holiday, visit the State of Texas Comptroller's website.

[Visit the Comptroller's website for more details about the WATER SENSE Sales Tax Holiday.](#)

NATIONAL GROUNDWATER AWARENESS IN MAY

National Groundwater Awareness Week (GWA) is an annual observance established in 1999 to highlight the responsible development, management, and use of groundwater, the event is also a platform to encourage yearly water well testing and well maintenance, and the promotion of policies impacting groundwater quality and supply. Groundwater advocates across the country also use GWA to highlight local water issues in their communities.

As more than 44 percent of the population depends on groundwater as a primary water source, developing an interest in the groundwater industry is of vital importance to both the health and economy of the country. Groundwater professionals span a wide variety of careers and skills including well contractors, hydrogeologists, groundwater policy advocates, and suppliers and manufacturers of groundwater technology.

[To learn more about the National Ground Water Association and its helpful educational materials and programs for well owners, follow this link.](#)



FAIR OAKS RANCH UPDATES ITS DROUGHT MANAGEMENT CONTINGENCY PLAN

As part of its water conservation and sustainability programs, the City of Fair Oaks Ranch updated its Drought Contingency Plan to better align with other regional entities such as the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) and Trinity Glen Rose Groundwater Conservation District (TGRCD). The Fair Oaks Ranch City Council adopted these updates to the Drought Contingency Plan on February 6, with the new rules becoming effective date of April 1.

The key changes to the Drought Contingency Plan include:

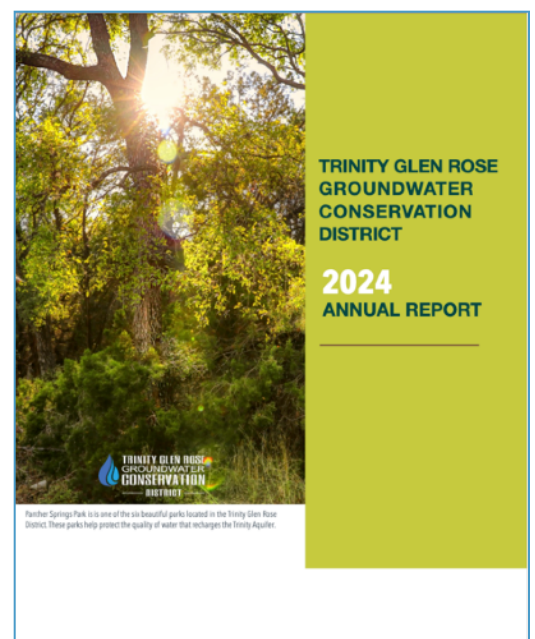
- New 4-Stage Drought Plan: The previous 3-stage system has been expanded to a 4-stage plan to provide a more gradual approach to water conservation.
- Stage 3 Watering Restrictions: Landscape irrigation will now be limited to every other week to further reduce non-essential water use.
- Drip Irrigation Adjustments: Drip irrigation is now limited to Monday, Wednesday, and Friday under Stage 3, and further reduced to once per week under Stage 4.
- Power Washing Restrictions: Power washing is now prohibited at Stage 3 to help conserve water during critical periods.
- Ornamental Fountains: Use of ornamental fountains is now allowed only in Stage 2, provided they feature recirculating technology to minimize water loss.

By implementing these new measures, the City aims to prevent water shortages, protect the environment, and support long-term water supply sustainability. For a detailed breakdown of the updated Drought Contingency Plan, please visit the [City's Drought Contingency Plan webpage](#).

TGR DISTRICT 2024 ANNUAL REPORT READY FOR DOWNLOAD

The TGR District Board of Directors has approved publishing the District's 2024 Annual Report.

In the report you'll find the last calendar year's financial data, how the District performed against its management plan goals, an update of the growth of District operations, a rundown on how District staff and board members interacted with the community regarding new policies, water conservation opportunities and programs for protecting the Trinity Aquifer. You can read and download the [TGR 2024 Annual Report at this page on the District website](#).



GO GARDENING

Check out what's happening in this edition of your favorite landscape show - **Go Gardening!**



In May, the Go Gardening Show, supported by the Trinity Glen Rose District, is featuring an interview at the Edwards Aquifer Authority's Field Research Park. Mark Hamilton and Thomas Marsalia gave our crew a tour of the 150 acre tract and talked about the new and innovative research on the Edwards Aquifer and how the aquifer and your landscape at home can look great and save water by using native plants instead of turf. If you're a little knowledgeable of the Edwards Aquifer, you won't want to miss this fascinating discussion on how researchers are learning more about this critical water supply for the Edwards Aquifer Region.

Next, the Go Gardening team visited a home in the Rogers Ranch area. We first saw our guest, Alexa Volpe on the South Texas Gardener Show which airs from Austin, and we knew we had to see her landscape in person. Alexa talked about how she converted a turf-grass only yard into her own park-like setting featuring Texas Native Plants and a few native adapted plants. What also makes this interview so interesting is that Alexa and her family moved from Georgia to Texas about six years ago, and she quickly learned the importance of picking the right native plants for her landscape rather relying on her "gardening in Georgia" know-how. [Click here to watch the latest Go Gardening Show.](#)

TGR'S DROUGHT TOLERANT PLANT PICKS

Having a water-saving garden doesn't mean you have to sacrifice color and even year round color in your landscape. Here are our Plant Picks for adding some colorful, water-saving native plants to your landscape.

The **Damianita, Chrysactinia mexicana** is super drought-tolerant, evergreen and deer-resistant native plant. It is readily available from local nurseries and because it doesn't need any water once it's established, these are great to plant around mailboxes or those small strips of land near streets.



Photo by Joseph A. Marcus, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

The **Blackfoot daisy, Melampodium leucanthum** is another gorgeous plant that can withstand South Texas heat. The colorful yellow, red and orange blooms will lighten up your landscape throughout the summer. Because it loves heat, it will be slow growing in the spring but will take off and bloom throughout the summer.



RAIN BARRELS - RIGHT AS RAIN

Most Texans know that droughts are common, but so are powerful storms. What if you could turn those sudden downpours into a free, sustainable water supply? Rainwater harvesting is the way to get that done.

With a few basic tools, any homeowner can start collecting rain—whether for gardens, livestock, or emergency use. Here are the three essential components for harvesting rain:

1. **Catchment surface (your roof)**

Metal, tile, or asphalt shingle roofs work best, but just about any roof material will do. The bigger your roof, the more water you can collect.

2. **Conveyance system (gutters and downspouts)**

You'll want clean, sloped gutters—at least 1/16-inch drop per foot—to direct water efficiently, and leaf guards on your gutters are ideal to minimize debris.

3. **Storage (barrels or cisterns)**

For beginners and small systems, all you need is a 50- to 100-gallon barrel, preferably made of food-grade plastic. Such barrels can be found at your local hardware store or online for as little as \$40. If you already have a barrel, conversion kits to add a spigot and overflow valve are also available—just make sure that your barrel is opaque or paint it so sunlight can't penetrate. Otherwise, you'll likely find the water in your barrel filled with algae! **Important Point - rainwater collected in these barrels is not drinkable!**

There's nothing wrong with starting out small with a single barrel. But, it's good to know how much water you could collect if you decide to expand your system in the future. Calculating the volume of collectable water is straightforward: 1 cubic foot is 7.48 gallons, which means that 1 inch of rainfall produces .623 gallons per square foot. This simple formula will tell you the potential volume of water your home can collect in a year. $\text{Gallons} = \text{Rainfall (inches)} \times \text{Roof Area (sq ft)} \times 0.623$.

[You read a whole lot more about rain barrels and saving water at this link.](#)

[You can watch a how-to video from the Trinity Glen Rose District here.](#)

[Learn about conserving water indoors and outdoors at Don't Waste the Wet Stuff.](#)



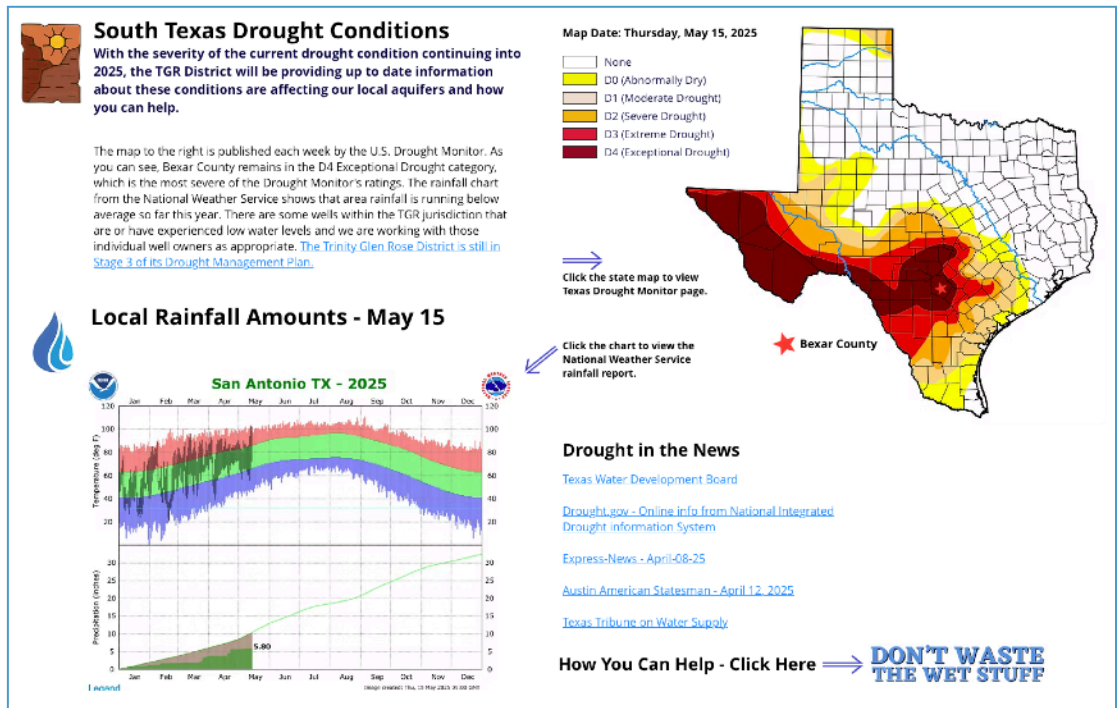
DROUGHT DASHBOARD

Get the latest updates on the state of the ongoing drought in the State of Texas.

With the severity of the current drought conditions continuing into 2025, the TGR District is providing up to date information about these conditions affecting local aquifers and how you can help.

At the TGR Drought Dashboard on the District's website home page, you will find the current U.S. drought monitor map, the rainfall chart from the National Weather Service, current drought news articles and a link to some great water conservation recommendations at our Don't Waste the Wet Stuff page.

[Just click on this link to check it out.](#)



TGR DETAILS

Trinity Glen Rose Groundwater Conservation District



Connect with TGR on Facebook.

Board of Directors

Dr. Stuart Birnbaum - Precinct 1
Joe duMenil - Precinct 2 (Chairman)
Steven Peterson - Precinct 3
Joe Silman - Precinct 4
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TGR Mission

The Trinity Glen Rose Groundwater Conservation District was created in 2001 to conserve, preserve, and protect the Trinity Aquifer within the District.