

MEDIA RELEASE

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Hottest Week on Record in Brisbane: A Warning to Protect Your Garden

Queensland is gearing up for one of its hottest weeks on record this week, with temperatures set to spike at around 32 degrees by Wednesday – and for many home owners that could prove disastrous for gardens.

Brisbane gardening expert Peter Mumford, who owns Arbor Operations, warned home owners and organisations to take fast action before plants get destroyed.

“Our unusually warm winter weather already has gardens in spring-mode with new plant growth, so a blast of heat can leave plants and lawns badly burnt,” said Mr Mumford.

“Plants have been thinking it’s spring – we’ve seen lawns full of bindi prickles, roses blooming early and even the bugs have descended,” he said.

“If homeowners and corporations with large garden beds want any hope of salvaging their gardens as we head into one of the hottest August weeks on record, they need to be thinking moisture retention.”

“It’s not too late to mulch, which could prove key to hanging on to any moisture that is in the soil.”

“Mulch will conserve moisture for your plants while killing spring weeds at the same time.”

“It can reduce watering by up to 60%, and is great for the soil’s health too.”

“Just don’t be too overzealous piling the mulch high though, or the water won’t penetrate through to the soil and plants”.

In addition to mulching, Mr Mumford had the following tips to avoid a garden meltdown this week:

- **Don’t water in the heat of the day:** People are often tempted to water during the hottest part of the day, when they think their plants will need it most but this can lead to leaf-burn. The evenings are actually a far better time as the water won’t evaporate as fast and will have time to penetrate down to the roots, where the plants need it most.
- **If you haven’t pruned yet, leave it until the weather gets cooler:** Rose gardeners in particular will be unsure of what to do if they’ve left pruning to the last minute. Best not prune until the heatwave is over or it will leave plants vulnerable to drying out fast.
- **Don’t go overboard with the reticulation:** The soil still does have some moisture from the cooler winter temperatures, so over-reacting and leaving your reticulation on for hours at a time is not a good idea. Short bursts of watering will help maintain moisture levels.

- **Protect your lawn:** Don't cut your lawn down like a bowling green at this time. Lawnmowers should be set a little higher to keep the grass longer, or don't mow at all until the temperatures drop. This will keep more vegetation on the top to protect the fine root growth below, which is needed to collect moisture.
- **Spring bug invasion:** Sucking pests such as aphids, thrips and mealybugs are flying around everywhere at the moment, and they'll be attacking the delicate new shoots of plants. An easy way to get rid of them is by gently washing plants with soapy water to protect new growth and smother the insects.

"It's been a long time since we've seen winter temperatures like this in Brisbane," said Mr Mumford.

"It has thrown many gardeners and plants into a state of confusion – the best idea is to plan ahead."

About Peter Mumford:

Peter is the owner of Arbor Operations in Brisbane and has been involved in the Queensland agriculture, horticulture and arboriculture industries for more than forty years. He is a qualified arboriculturalist and provides gardening consultancy services to a range of clients, including schools and governments.

More information: <http://www.arboroperations.com.au/> .

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*High-res images are attached. More are available on request.
Peter Mumford is available for interview and photo opportunities.*

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