# Protecting Gardens During a Heat Wave: Practical Tips



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Gardeners are currently dealing with the impacts of a significant heatwave that has hit many regions. Prolonged high temperatures can stress plants and affect their growth. This article outlines key actions to help your garden thrive despite the heat.

### Effects of Heat on Tomato Plants

Tomato plants, commonly grown in home gardens, are particularly vulnerable during extreme heat. Temperatures above 85-94 degrees Fahrenheit can cause flower drop, hindering fruit production. Soil temperatures also play a critical role. Research indicates that when soil temperature reaches the mid-80 degrees Fahrenheit, root activity decreases drastically.

### Practical Measures for Gardeners

To protect plants during heat waves, consider the following strategies:

**Shade Provision**: Provide plants with additional shade using cloths or strategically placed garden furniture. Plants like roses have shown better tolerance in part shade situations.

**Container Management**: Use larger containers to maintain a more stable root zone temperature. For example, a 36-inch container placed on a hot driveway might require frequent watering to prevent overheating.

**Irrigation Practices**: Watering not only supplies essential moisture but also helps in cooling the soil and roots. Implementing a routine that includes early morning and evening watering can be beneficial.

**Select Heat-Tolerant Varieties**: Choose plant varieties bred for heat tolerance, which perform better under high-temperature conditions.

**Tree Planting**: Planting more trees can provide natural shade and reduce overall ground temperature in the garden.

### Coffee Grounds for Tomato Plants

Experts emphasize the importance of a consistent supply of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium for tomatoes. Spent coffee grounds, a common kitchen waste item, are rich in these nutrients. Incorporating coffee grounds into the soil at planting and throughout the growing season can help improve soil structure and provide a steady nutrient supply.

Mix two to three tablespoons of used coffee grounds in the planting hole for an initial nutrient boost. Additionally, periodically apply the grounds around the base of tomato plants to enhance soil quality and plant health.

### Conclusion

By providing extra shade, using appropriate irrigation techniques, opting for heat-tolerant plant varieties, and utilizing kitchen waste like coffee grounds, gardeners can significantly improve their plants' resilience to extreme heat. These practices ensure that your garden continues to flourish even under challenging weather conditions.