

1.3 Longer, warmer and drier growing season

As the climate changes, our summers are projected to become drier even though Southern Ontario is expected to see an increase in annual average precipitation. The increase in precipitation will be unable to compensate for the increasing evaporation due to higher temperatures. It is more likely that increases in precipitation will be apparent during the winter months (see impact 1.4), with summers experiencing drier soils and more droughts compared to the baseline data.

During hot, dry summers water use can increase by as much as 50 per cent which makes it likely that as summers become hotter and drier Halton Region will need to increase restrictions on water use. It is important to make sure that water remains available for emergency and essential services like firefighting and flushing toilets, especially since during droughts fires are more common.

One way we can benefit from increased precipitation is to increase our capacity for year round rain water capture and storage by using rain barrels or under and above ground cisterns. Halton Region holds four rain barrel sales for residents each spring. For information on dates and locations, visit [Halton Region's website](#).

This variability in temperature and precipitation introduce the potential for warmer winters and earlier springs which will impact local vegetation in a few different ways. Vegetation may emerge early, bloom in the unseasonably warm spring and die off when confronted with a cold snap. This can be detrimental to healthy new growth, buds, blooms, fruits and vegetables.

Vegetation may also be stressed by warmer temperatures and drier soils so it is crucial to care for newly planted vegetation to ensure its survival. Changes may occur to those species of plants that can survive new and less stable conditions.

Building your resiliency to a warmer, drier and more variable growing season

- Visit the [town's website](#) for proper care and maintenance tips for newly planted vegetation. Tips include ensuring vegetation is watered regularly, roots are shaded and that soil conditions are appropriate.
- Support Halton [Region farms!](#) Location of farms and harvest details can be found at [Simply Local](#).
- Connect with local community groups such as [Oakville Sustainable Food Partnership](#) as well as the [Oakville Horticultural Society](#) to learn about their efforts to support and enhance local food production.
- Join [PlantWatch](#), a national volunteer monitoring program designed to help with the identification of ecological changes with the goal of helping scientists to understand how and why our environment is changing.

On the brighter side, the increasing annual temperatures may allow for later and/or multiple plantings and harvesting of fruits and vegetables per season. Also it may be possible to grow a wider variety of fruit and vegetables in our gardens.

Building the town's resiliency to a warmer, drier and more variable growing season:

- Refer to the Natural Environment and Biodiversity and Health and Wellness in the town's Climate Change Strategy.