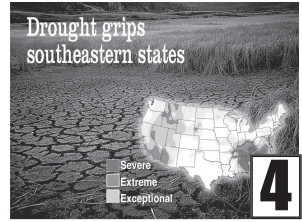


Drought grips southeastern states



A record-breaking drought is causing problems for several southeastern states

BASIC

Do you know what a drought is? A

drought occurs when it doesn't rain, or hardly rains at all, for a long, long time. It can cause a lot of damage. The Southeastern part of the U.S., including the states Georgia, Alabama, and Florida, is having a very serious drought. **Do you live in or have you been to any of these states?** Normally this area gets a lot of rain, so people are having a hard time with this. **Who do you think are the first people affected by a drought?** Farmers depend on rainfall for their crops and their livestock. Many farmers in this area

have lost crops and are having a very hard time making a living. And now the drought is affecting

people in cities, too. **Your water may come from a well, but do you know where the water in your well comes from?** (Often it comes from groundwater, water that's stored deep in the ground in the earth or between rocks.) When it doesn't rain for a long time, there is less groundwater, and now some cities have little water left in their wells. NEXT

GENERAL

What is drought?
(A prolonged period

of abnormally low rainfall.) **Do you live in any of the drought areas shown on this map?** The Southeastern states of the U.S., which include Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama, are known for their humid climates and lush vegetation, caused by the relatively heavy rainfall this area normally gets. But this area is suffering from a drought that's becoming more and more damaging. It's the second year with little rainfall, and it's the region's driest year in 113 years of record-keeping. Farmers have lost crops and are suffering financially. And now this drought has started taking its toll on cities as well, making people think about

something they usually take for granted: water. **Do you ever think about where your water comes from?** Most of us take it for granted that clean water will run out of our faucets and that we can use as much as we want. But that's not always true. Your water probably comes from a city well, and most likely the well is supplied by either a body of water nearby, or from the area's groundwater, the water that's held underground in soil or in spaces between rocks. Because the Southeast is so very dry, some cities' wells have started running dry. And unlike the dry Western states, some of which are also suffering from drought, people in this area aren't used to worrying about how much water they use. NEXT

ADVANCED

The southeastern U.S. is known for its semi-tropical climate and lush vegetation, the source of succulent Georgia peaches and Florida oranges. Humid weather and relatively heavy rainfall are the norm here. Yet for many months, this region has been suffering from an uncharacteristic drought that is slowly causing more and more devastation. Rainfall in much of this region is more than a foot below normal this year. For the first time in more than 100 years, parts of this region have reached the most severe category of drought. Farmers, of course, are the first to suffer; many have watched crops wither in the field. **Do you think emergency water supplies should be set aside for farmers? Would you skimp on water to help farmers?** Now the drought

is causing an emergency situation for many cities. Dwindling groundwater is causing wells to run dry and some cities are mere months away from running out of water. **Do you live in any of the states shown here on the map that are experiencing some level of drought?** Many states are affected by drought this year, including parts of the West. But while the dry West has experience with dealing with little rainfall, the Southwest does not. And some experts think that officials here have planned poorly and responded inadequately to the crisis. Mike Hayes, director of the National Drought Mitigation Center said, "This idea of wait-and-see, because some (rain) might be around the corner, can really suppress timely responses." NEXT