



Watering the Right Way

Lawns and landscape plants need moisture to survive and flourish. While the water needs of plants vary by species, there are watering techniques common to most plants.

■ Watering facts

Too much vs. too little:

It's best to water just before the plant really needs it. How much water do you apply? Set out a few shallow containers (tuna fish cans work great for this) on the lawn. Run the sprinkler or sprinkler system for one hour; measure the amount of water in the can. If you collected a half-inch of water, it would take 2–3 hours to apply the needed amount. As a general rule of thumb, and if rainfall has not been adequate, follow these calculations:

Lawn	1-1½" water per week
Established Trees & Shrubs	1-1½" water every 7 to 14 days
Vegetables & Flower Garden	1-1½" water per week

**New plantings should be checked for water daily for the first 6 weeks (a month for summer plantings), then every other day thereafter for the first growing season. Keep in mind that this is only the frequency for checking moisture, NOT how often to water – too many factors come into play to follow a single watering schedule.

Note: Consider natural rainfall in your calculations, too.

■ Water plants infrequently & deeply

This means applying all needed water in one watering, if possible. No more than once or twice a week. This encourages a deeper root system, which is healthier for plants.

Frequent sprinklings encourage shallow roots that struggle during stressful periods of drought or harsh winters.

■ Water early in the day

Why? Because of evaporation, you will waste water if you water too frequently or during the heat of the day. Watering early in the day encourages foliage to dry before evening, avoiding the possibility of disease with certain plants like lilac and turf grasses. It is best if watering takes place after morning dew dries in months when dew is prevalent.



■ Soil type plays a role in drainage and water absorption

Don't know your soil type? We can help! Ask us how.

Sandy soils generally do not retain soil moisture; they drain too readily (think of the sand at the beach).

Clay soils tend to retain too much soil moisture (soil that puddles hours after a rain).

Loamy soil is ideal; it allows for needed water retention and soil oxygen as well as good drainage.

■ Mulching helps with water conservation

- Stabilizes soil temperatures
- Reduces weeds that rob the soil of moisture
- Provides aesthetic value to the landscape and conserves moisture.

A word to the wise: 2" to 3" of organic mulch is all that's needed. Avoid piling on the mulch, especially around the trunk or stems of plants. Stay a few inches away from the bark. By watering properly and using mulch, you protect your plants, and prevent insect and disease problems.



Watering Equipment & Methods

Sprinklers

- An easy way to provide overhead watering for lawns and landscape plants, choose from oscillating or pulsating.
- Place and adjust sprinklers to target lawns, flower and shrub beds and avoid wasting water on walks and driveways.
- Consider adding a timer to make watering easy.
- Add a timer to the faucet to automatically shut off the sprinkler when adequate water has been applied to help conserve water.

Soaker Hoses

Put water exactly where the plant needs it – at the root system – with a soaker hose. It emits water from tiny holes in the hose. Place a soaker hose in the garden and leave there for the entire season. You can also bury it under mulch.

Since soaker hoses do not wet the foliage of plants, they greatly reduce disease problems in the landscape and are more efficient than overhead-type irrigation systems.

Drip Irrigation

Drip irrigation systems place small amounts of water near the roots of plants over a long time period. Homeowners can install kit drip systems, for vegetable gardens, flowerbeds, small ornamental gardens and container plantings.

Large-scale drip irrigation systems are best installed by a licensed professional.

Just like soaker hoses, drip systems do not wet the foliage of plants, thereby reducing disease problems in the landscape.



Watering Cans

Ideal when you are watering small areas or a few planters, and are near a water source.

Automatic Irrigation Systems

Enormously popular because they are automatic and worry free. Consider having a professional design and install the system. Lawns should be on separate zones from your landscaped beds as they have different watering requirements.



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