

Keeping Plants Hydrated in Extreme Hot Weather

Watering plants can be fun, but with the high summer temperatures approaching here are some tips so your plants don't suffer damage.

Water Like You Know What you are Doing!

Get your plants to absorb as much water as possible by watering them in the early morning. Later, in the hottest part of the day, plants will absorb less water due to the heat causing plant physiology to shut down.

Drip irrigation or watering by hand is great way to place water at the roots, but you must make sure to wet the entire root zone.

Hose end battery timers installed on your faucets can be used to water automatically, without you being in the heat, and it makes it easier to get the water out early.

Sometimes overhead watering can cool the foliage and prevent burning. Some plants shut down in the heat and do not efficiently take up water, so cooling the leaves helps reduce stress.



Additional practices to Reduce Water

- **Mulch.**
Mulching cools the soil and prevents weeds from growing and using up the water in the root zones. Mulch can be shredded bark or other decorative mulches. Compost makes a great mulch as it also improves the soil. Mulch from tree trimming companies is a great resource if you can get it.
- **Remove weeds**
Weeds steal the water intended for your plants. Besides that, they don't look so good in the garden!

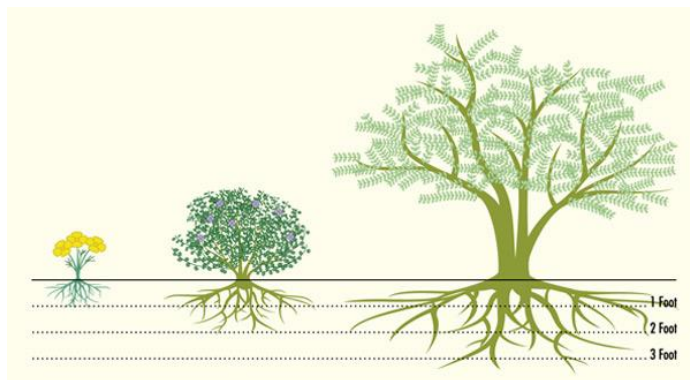
How Much Water and How Often

Vegetable and flower gardens need about 1" of water per week, but in extreme weather they may need more. You may need to water every day or every other day.

Containers of flowers and vegetables may need deep waterings every day if in full sun and possibly every other day in shade. Test the soil with your finger to determine if water is necessary.

Newly planted trees and shrubs should be watered deeply when the soil has dried out. They may need water every day. Use the finger test to determine if water is needed. It only takes a few days without water to kill newly planted trees and shrubs. As the plants get established, they will need less frequent waterings. Keep a close eye on newly planted trees and shrubs for the two years or so. Young trees need about 10 gallons per inch on trunk per week. A Dewitt watering bag can be very useful for newly planted trees!

During prolonged dry spells established trees and shrubs may need deep watering. Apply a deep watering over the entire root zone area until the top 24 inches of soil is penetrated.



Leaving Town?

Ideally, you will have someone come over to water your plants while you are on vacation. If that is not an option, try these techniques that we use:

Outdoors place battery timers on your facets to schedule waterings. This easy to do method works great for short or long trips. Get yourself a good low sprinkler or soaker hose. Hook it up to the timer. Set your timer to the preferred day, time, and length of watering.

If possible, move containers in the shadiest spots while you are away. Cut off all flowers and flower buds before you leave on vacation. It will take some stress off the plants. For reblooming perennials and annuals, it will rejuvenate the plants, giving you fresh blooms when you return.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Avoid light watering as this evaporates quickly and has little benefit to plants in the garden. Shallow watering also leads to shallow roots. Plants with shallow roots will be more susceptible to summer heat and drought stress. Water deeply to encourage roots deeper into the soil.