

Effective Watering Techniques

Watering plants, trees, shrubs and turf can be a bit tricky, depending on the weather, wind, time of day and location of the plant material. Follow these tips to ensure success in your landscape.

Best Time to Water

Ideally, watering in the early morning or in the evening, after the strongest heat of the day is the best time to water. After your perennials have gone dormant and the leaves have dropped off your deciduous trees and shrubs, you will still need to water evergreens. If you have a sprinkler system and it's turned off in the winter, make certain to plan to continue watering your evergreens. Their needles will lose moisture through them during the winter. If they do not have ample store of water in the winter, they will be dead by spring.

How Much to Water

Most often, a plant doesn't suffer from overwatering during a one-time application. Typically, when water is applied too frequently and before the plant material has not had ample time to dry out, that's when the damage occurs. And too much watering can lead to various root diseases. Consider watering potted plants more frequently because they tend to dry out faster than material that's planted in the ground. Newly planted items require a more consistent and sometimes frequent watering.

Hand Watering vs Drip/Sprinkler System

This is a debate that will probably go on for decades to come. The truth of the matter is drip irrigation and soaker hoses is, by far, the most effective method for watering. With drip and soaker hoses, there is less loss of water so, from a conservation perspective, you are saving money. Overhead water is less effective and you run the risk of creating fungal and disease problems as well as it wastes water. On windy days, you may lose more than 50% of water due to evaporation even before it gets to your plant material. When hand watering make certain to water at the base of your perennials and annuals.

Shallow vs Deep Watering

Shallow watering may seem like the preferred approach in order to avoid flooding the growing medium and avoid potential root disease. But, because less water is applied, the growing medium will dry out sooner. Deep watering is the best approach for turf rather than shallow watering several days a week. Plant material that gets lots of sun, especially potted plants, require deeper watering during hot and windy days.

Use a Rain Gauge

A rain gauge will measure how many centimeters or inches of rain in your area so you will be able to give plants the desired amount of water.

Use Waste Water

Make good use of water used from preparing vegetables and washing up and from baths and showers. Make certain not to use water containing bleach or other household cleaning products as they may be damaging to plant material.

Following these guidelines will keep your landscape looking healthy and keep you happy.