



Watering Guidelines

The main reason plants fail to survive is that they are either given too much or too little water. The following tips should help ensure the success of your plants.

HOW TO WATER: For most plants, use a hose with a nozzle. You want a moderate flow; a good flow is 4 gallons per minute. A good check is to get the water to fill a gallon container in 13-17 seconds. Put the hose directly at the base of each plant. This method allows water to soak down two feet into most soils; that is where the roots need the water. Quick thunderstorms usually saturate your soil down to only six inches, so be prepared to water your larger plants even after it rains. For ground covers, use a sprinkler or a hose with a nozzle set at "spray." This method is not recommended for larger plants and trees. Your groundcovers need about an inch of water at each watering to saturate the ground to a depth of six inches. A good check is to set an old coffee can by the sprinkler; when the can measures close to an inch of water, it is time to move the sprinkler to another area.

HOW MUCH TO WATER: Amount of water by minutes, hose without nozzle:

General Plant Size	Minutes
1 - 2'	2
2 - 3'	3
3 - 5'	5
6 - 8'	6
1-1/2 - 2" Cal.	8
2 - 2-1/2" Cal.	10
2-1/2 - 3" Cal.	12
Larger	15

In clay soil with poor percolation, you will find that watering will have to be done in 2-3 minute intervals; the water will need time to sink in. To save time, water your large plants first, then water the small ones, then return to the large ones.

WHEN TO WATER: This is the most difficult item to explain, and the most important to understand for plant survival. The first consideration is soil: the more porous your soil, the more you will have to water. The second consideration is the season: you will water more often in late spring and summer, of course. Exposure is the third consideration, equally important. Plants in shade do not need as much as those in the sun. Foundation plants on the south and west sides of your house will need water more often, as the sun is hottest on these sides. In general, your plants should be watered heavily when first planted, and every other day for their first three weeks in the ground. Afterwards, water when the soil is dry. A good check is just to dig down a few inches in your beds, and see if the ground is dry. Over watering can, be as damaging to plants as under watering.

TURF WATERING: To achieve optimum germination, your turf should be watered every other day for a minimum of 30 days. Your turf will require at least 1" of water every week thereafter during the growing season. For newly installed sod, watering will be required daily.