

Until the root system is established, usually one full year, check the soil for moisture. Use a moisture meter or pull back the mulch and feel the soil along side the rootball about four inches below ground level. Check the soil moisture every 3-5 days during the spring and fall. During the hot, dry summer months, check every 2-3 days for smaller plants and every 3-5 days for larger plants and trees.

If the soil is dry, water thoroughly until the entire root ball and surrounding soil is wet. If the soil is moist, do not water and check the soil in another few days. Find a “happy medium” where soil is not too wet or too dry. Learn how long your soil takes to dry out slightly between waterings. **Do not water a plant unless it needs it!** Too little water (top moist and bottom dry) or too much water (constant saturation) can be fatal.

If you encounter a problem with your plants, please contact us as soon as possible. If wilting, yellowing, or falling leaves occur we can help determine what might be causing the problem and take corrective action.

## WATERING METHODS

**Garden Hose:** Turn the water on to a slow trickle and set the end of the hose on top of the root ball of a plant. Determine how long to leave it on based on the size of the plant. For example, during hot and dry weather, a large tree with a trunk diameter of 2½”, leave the hose on for approximately 1½ hours. Move the end of the hose several times during watering to ensure that the entire root ball is saturated. This method is ideal for watering a single plant or tree or a small number of plants.

**Soaker Hose:** A soaker hose applies water slowly to the plants and is usually used to water plants growing in a row or a bed. Make sure the hose covers all sides of the plants. Let the water run long enough to soak the root ball and surrounding soil, depending on the size of the plants. For example, during hot and dry weather on plants that are 18” tall, a “sweating type” soaker hose should be left to run for at least 4 hours.

**Sprinklers:** Sprinklers are a good way to soak an entire bed of plants, especially those with a lot of annuals and perennials. Watering the plants deeply and thoroughly is the key.

**Watering Wand:** Use water wands to provide supplemental watering. Container grown plants are often grown in a light bark mix that does not hold moisture well and can dry out more quickly than balled and burlapped plants. In addition to using one of the above methods, use the wand as needed to soak the root ball and surrounding soil thoroughly for several minutes, moving the wand over the entire root zone area. Let the water soak in while you water the next plant. Then go back and water each plant again for several minutes with the wand. Repeat as needed, depending on the size of the root ball.

**Gator Bags:** These are used to water trees during hot and dry summer months. Gator bags hold up to 20 gallons of water, are secured to the trunk of the tree, and release the water slowly to the root ball over the course of 15-20 hours.

## **WATERING TIPS**

- Container grown plants dry out more quickly than “balled and burlapped” plants. During dry weather, use a watering wand to soak the root ball as needed.
- Water trees and shrubs thoroughly as needed during summer months and late fall before the onset of winter.
- Summer thunderstorms provide helpful moisture, but should not be considered a substitute for deep watering.
- Large trees can take several years to become established in the landscape. Additional watering is needed during dry spells and summer droughts.
- Plants growing in the shade of large trees dry out more quickly because of the competition for moisture from the large tree roots. Adjust watering schedules accordingly.
- Wilted leaves can result from the soil being either too dry or too wet. Be sure to feel the soil before watering.
- Bedding plants, hanging baskets and potted plants may need water daily during summer months. Use water-grabbing polymers such as Soil Moist™ to reduce the frequency of watering. These polymers absorb the excess water that typically drains through the pot, hold it in a jell form and release it to the roots when needed.

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