

# WATERING

## Basic Guidelines

**Always check** the soil moisture before watering. Plants may look wilted from too much water as well as from too little.

**Pull back** the mulch and dig down 1-4". You should water most plants when the soil is just moist. Moist soil will feel cool to the touch but not wet. It should be somewhat crumbly, but not dry and powdery.

**Thorough, deep watering** is more effective than frequent, light watering. Deep watering encourages deep roots and drought tolerance.

**Adding organic matter** (peat moss, mushroom compost) when planting helps to keep water available for the plant and to improve drainage.

**Always water** plants very well as you plant them, even if it is raining or predicted to rain.

**Water trees and shrubs** with a slow trickling open ended hose, a soaker hose, or a deep root waterer inserted into the ground. Never use a sprinkler for these.

### **Water more frequently if:**

- Soil is very light and well-drained
- Weather is hot, sunny or windy.
- Plants are small or newly planted.
- The area is exposed to wind and sun. (West or South exposure)
- Plants are actively growing in spring or early summer.
- Plants are moisture lovers or shallow rooted such as azaleas.
- Plants are flowering.

### **Water less frequently if:**

- Soil is clay or poorly drained.
- Weather is cool and humid.
- Plants are large and well established.
- Area is sheltered or shaded.
- Plants are going dormant in the fall.
- Plants are drought tolerant.

## Conserving Moisture

**Mulch** all your plants 2 – 3" deep with shredded hardwood, cypress or cocoa hull mulch.

**Water slowly** to avoid runoff. Soaker hoses are excellent for this.

**Do not use a sprinkler** on a windy day, and never on trees or shrubs.

**Sacrifice watering** your lawn before your shrubs, trees, flowers and vegetables; the lawn will go dormant and is more likely to recover.

**Control weeds.** They will rob your desirable plants of needed moisture.

## When and How to Water

	<b>When</b>	<b>How</b>
<b>Container Gardens</b>	When soil is barely moist 1" below surface	Until water runs freely from drainage holes.
<b>Newly planted:</b>		
Shrubs and small trees	Soil is barely moist 1" below surface	With trickling open ended hose for 5-15 minutes
Large balled and burlapped plants	Soil is barely moist 2-3" down	As above for 15-20 minutes
Annuals, perennials, groundcovers and vegetables	Soil barely moist 1" down	Hose with watering wand, soaker hose or sprinkler until soaked 12-18" deep.

**Established:**

Shrubs and trees

Soil is barely moist 3-4" down

Slow flowing hose for 10-30 minutes