

Caring For Your Landscape: Watering Tips

No matter how smart you are about conservation, though, eventually you'll have to water. The main question people usually have about watering, especially about their lawns, is: how much?

The simple answer is that **lawns require about an inch of water a week**. The tricky part is to figure out how to translate that inch of water into minutes on your sprinkler. There's no way around it, you have to measure. Set up your sprinkler as usual and put out a rain gauge, which can be as simple as an empty coffee can. Water for 15 or 20 minutes, then check how much water is in the can. If you water for 15 minutes and get 1/4 inch of water, you know you need four times that amount of time to get to an inch. That means you need 60 minutes of watering a week to keep the lawn healthy. If 15 minutes on your sprinkler provides half an inch of water, you only need 30 minutes total a week.

But don't do a week's worth of watering all at once (the ground probably can't absorb it and water will run off), and don't water a few minutes every day (the top layer will stay soggy and water won't get down to the roots). Instead, you should water three times a week, for a third of your required minutes each time, with a day or two off in between waterings. Don't forget to subtract for rain. Try to water as early as possible in the morning, as long as it doesn't interfere with showers!

When it comes to **plants, trees, and shrubs**, take advantage of some new products to keep the water flowing. Drip bags are especially useful with new plantings. Simply set these plastic bags on top of the root ball of a new tree or shrub and fill it with water ? they slowly release the water over several hours. You can also add in liquid fertilizer at the same time.

Drip hoses are also great — they're full of tiny holes, so you just loop it around a group of trees and shrubs and turn on the spigot. Water is released along the entire length of hose. Look for one made of recycled rubber (we love to recycle), and you can buy or make metal staples to hold the hose in place. Be sure to read the manufacturer's directions before you use it — too much water pressure can cause a drip hose to fail.

With these tips in mind, you should be able to get your garden through the heat of summer unscathed, ready for the cooler days ahead.

Information courtesy of thisoldhouse.com

Watering Tips



Keep your garden well-watered with the right tools: soaker hoses, lightweight hoses, sprinklers, rain barrels and irrigation timers.

NOVA 
Landscape & Design

17715 Washington Street
Dumfries, Virginia 22026
(703) 441-6870