

Caring For Your Landscape: Watering Tips

You've got your new plants in the ground! Now it's time to start taking good care of them. Nurturing the roots of your newly planted trees and shrubs will require just the right amount of water. In general, a long, slow trickle is better than short, frequent bursts, as gradual watering encourages a deeper, wider spreading root system. Choose soaker hoses over sprinklers for all types of trees and shrubs. And keep in mind that plants need more water during hot summer months than during cooler periods, so adjust your watering accordingly.

Evergreen Shrubs

To keep your newly planted evergreen shrubs hardy and healthy, you'll need to water regularly for the first year, right up until the ground freezes. Make sure your evergreen shrubs get a thorough soak about twice a week via rain or supplemental watering. Evergreens require balance, as too much water can be as dangerous as too little. Over-watering can deprive roots of oxygen and create an environment prone to root rot, fungi, and bacteria. Keep an eye on rainfall, and occasionally check the soil near your shrubs. If the soil feels dry an inch below the surface, give your plants another good soak.

Flowering Shrubs

Flowering shrubs have diverse watering needs, so be sure to document the types of locations of different plants to ensure proper care. In addition to varying water needs, those plants that prefer shade will require less water than those which thrive in direct sunlight. The key is to avoid watering flowers and leaves and instead focus on keeping the root ball and the area around each shrub moist. Watering every 2 to 3 days is a good rule of thumb when it comes to frequency. And if your new flowering shrubs don't burst into bloom in the weeks after planting, don't worry. Transplanting can be stressful to plants, so they'll need adequate recovery time before putting out an abundance of flowers.

Deciduous Shrubs

Deciduous shrubs will need you to give them lots of water during the first year after planting -- about one inch of water weekly. Your goal is to get the whole root ball moist, and the average shrub has a root ball 12" to 20" deep. Once your deciduous shrubs are established, however, your job will get easier. A good soaking 2 to 3 times a week should be plenty, though you should always be aware of signs that shrubs are too dry, like wilting and shedding of leaves.

Perennial Flowers

Perennials and ground covers have shallower root systems than trees and shrubs, so shorter watering sessions with greater frequency will work for these types of plants. Use the shower setting on your hose or water wand for 15 to 20 seconds at a time. Always do your watering several hours before dusk, and remember that there's no benefit to watering leaves or flowers. Aim for the roots. Water dissipates more quickly from the top layer of soil, so it's important to inspect the soil once in a while to make sure your flowers are getting the moisture they need.

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

Watering Tips



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

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