

A GUIDE TO CARING FOR YOUR NEW PLANTINGS 101

Watering plays a crucial role in the early stages of a plant's life after it's been planted. Initially, new plantings require frequent watering to aid in root establishment and ensure proper growth. When we say a plant is 'established,' it means that it has settled comfortably into its new home. The exact timing can vary depending on the plant type and its environment. Essentially, an established plant is one that's rooted securely and can handle the ups and downs of its new environment. At this stage, it's ready to focus its energy on growth and development.

Once your plant has settled in, it won't need quite as much water, but will still need some TLC to keep thriving. At this point, you can shift gears to a less intensive watering routine that focuses on maintaining ideal moisture levels to support continued health and growth. Understanding this process will empower you to make informed decisions when it comes to nurturing your plants through each stage of their development.

WATERING BASICS



01

Test Soil Moisture

Check the moisture level of the soil by sticking your finger into the soil about an inch deep. If it feels dry at this depth, it's time to water.



02

Water Deeply

Watering deeply will encourage plants' roots to grow longer and deeper, increasing their ability to soak up and hold water.



03

Morning is Best

Watering in the morning lets plants absorb moisture before the day's heat evaporates it & helps prevent fungal diseases from foliage staying wet for too long.



04

Adjust for Weather

During hot, dry weather, you may need to water more frequently. Conversely, during cooler or rainy periods, you may need to water less often.



05

Getting Established

New perennial plantings require more frequent watering until they become established. Once rooted, they usually require less maintenance.



06

Plant Specifics

Plants native to arid regions, may be more drought-tolerant and require less water, while those from boggy areas, may need more.

GUIDELINES BY SEASON

SPRING

WEEK 1:

Everyday to every other day

WEEKS 2-3:

2-3 times per week

WEEKS 4+:

2-3 times per week

SUMMER

WEEK 1:

Everyday

WEEKS 2-6:

2-3 times per week

WEEKS 6+:

As needed

FALL

WEEK 1:

Everyday to every other day

WEEKS 2-4:

1-3 times a week

WEEKS 4+: Gradually lessen & continue watering evergreens until the ground freezes

HOW DO I WATER MY PLANTS?

Proper watering involves deep and regular watering to ensure new roots receive sufficient moisture, as sprinklers or drip systems alone may not be enough penetrate the root ball adequately. Regardless of the type of plant, when you water, your goal is to fully soak the plant's root system.

It is best to water plants at their base. For a group of new plants a soaker hose may be laid out along their bases. If you have added just one or two new plants to the garden, it's better to individually water those few new plants with a regular hose, so that already established plants in the garden will not receive too much water.



TREES + SHRUBS

We recommend setting up a hose to slowly drip at the base of the plant for an hour or two. This means turning on the wand or hose at about quarter power. If possible, move the hose to a few different spots to get an even soaking. This ensures that the water will go deeply enough into the soil and the roots will be encouraged to grow deeper and wider.



GROUNDCOVER + PERENNIALS

Because these plants have much smaller root balls than their woody companions, they will need more frequent watering. Whether you are watering by hand or using a soaker hose, aim to penetrate the top 6-12" of soil.



CONTAINERS + PLANTERS

The most important thing to remember when watering containers is to water deeply—this means that you should see water running out of the drainage holes at the bottom of the container. Water around the entire container with the watering can or wand, including the edges, to ensure all of the soil is soaked.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN MY PLANTS NEED WATER?

THE FINGER DIP TEST

Simply push your finger into the soil near the base of the plant until you reach your knuckle.



CLEAN DRY FINGER

If the soil feels dry, and your finger comes out clean, then it's time to water.



MOIST FINGER

If the soil clings to your finger and feels wet, your plant doesn't need water.



Check your plant labels or do a quick online search to learn about the water preferences of plants in your garden. Keep in mind that some plants, like roses and ferns, prefer consistent moisture, while others, like lavender and rosemary, thrive on less frequent watering.

SHOULD I FERTILIZE MY PLANTS?

Proper care and fertilization will help your perennials grow larger and produce more blooms each season. Fertilizing encourages new growth and supports plant health. Often, there is temptation to apply extra fertilizer in the hopes of quickly producing more blooms. However, it's important to note that over-fertilizing results in more foliage, less blooms, and potential disease.

A slow-release granular fertilizer, such as Osmocote, is recommended for continuous feeding. Alternatively, Miracle-Gro can be used every two weeks when watering. Plants that like acidic soil can be fertilized with Holly Tone.

DON'T FORGET TO ALWAYS:

1. Monitor your plants and adjust fertilization based on growth habits and blooming activity.
2. Brush off and remove any fertilizer found on plant foliage as it can burn the leaves.
3. Read product labels and instructions carefully prior to application.



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR YOUR PLANTS



MULCH YOUR BEDS

Mulch offers a variety of benefits like moisture retention, weed suppression, soil improvement, temperature regulation, and erosion prevention. Choose the right mulch—organic options like wood chips or compost enrich the soil, while inorganic options like stones or landscape fabric offer long-lasting weed control. Clear the area of weeds and debris before applying a 2-4 inch layer of mulch, keeping it a few inches away from plant stems and trunks to prevent rot. Refresh organic mulch as it decomposes to maintain effectiveness and ensure your garden thrives.



PRUNE YOUR PLANTS

Pruning is crucial for plant health, appearance, and productivity. Prune spring-flowering plants after blooming, and summer-flowering/non-flowering plants in late winter or early spring. Use sharp, clean tools to remove dead or diseased wood, shape the plant, and improve air circulation. Avoid pruning more than one-third of the foliage at once as this can stress the plant. Prune above buds facing the desired direction of new growth. Benefits include improved plant health, enhanced growth and reduced risk of disease.



ADD SUPPORT WITH STAKES

Staking is essential for supporting newly planted trees and plants with heavy flowers or tall, brittle stems. Install stakes early in the spring so plants can grow through and around them, hiding the stakes by midseason. Use a gentle touch when securing plants to prevent damage, and choose stakes that match the plant's size and growth habit. As your plants grow, adjust the supports and remove stakes from trees after one year to prevent damage. Regularly check and maintain the stakes to ensure your plants remain upright and healthy.