Watering Your Plants

How, when and how much to water are very common gardening questions that are challenging to answer due to an array of gardening variables such as plant type, growing environment, soil conditions, weather, and the time of year. Therefore we would like to offer some general watering guidelines to assist in better, more efficient watering practices for your home and garden.

1. **Watering in the morning (indoors or out) is best.** If you haven’t been able to water all day, and the plants need it, apply water when you are best able.
2. **Apply water to the root zone deeply, thoroughly, and less frequently.** Focus on the base of the plant, not the foliage. When water percolates deep into the soil the roots will follow. Shallow, frequent watering makes the roots move to the soil surface where they dry out fast.
3. **One inch of water once per week is the standard for most landscape plants and lawns during a “normal” growing season.** Water needs increase if there’s prolonged dry or windy conditions or if you have sandy soil. A decrease may occur if it’s rainy, cool and with poor draining clay soil. Rock gardens, succulents, heat and drought tolerant plants will require less water in general. Moisture lovers such as Hydrangeas and tomatoes will need more.
4. **Newly installed plants should be watered deeply immediately after planting.** Keep an eye on them and try Quick Start™ in the water to insure good root establishment.
5. **To thoroughly water a plant or plants in a container, completely moisten the soil, let the excess water drain out the drainage holes, and repeat.** Smaller pots in sunny spots will require more frequent watering than larger pots in shade. Potted houseplants in the winter require less water than in summer; adjust your schedule (#7) accordingly for best results.
6. **If you are going to error, error on the dry side.** Plants tend to recover quicker from drought versus overwatering. Too much water may lead to root rot and suffocation from which plants do not return.
7. **Try developing a watering schedule.** For example:
   a. Sunday - check and water houseplants if needed
   b. Tuesday - assess newly planted tree, use tree watering bag for best water application
   c. Wednesday - run the soaker hose in the vegetable garden
   d. Friday - inspect irrigation in front yard, run if needed
   e. Every day - check and water outdoor containers if needed
8. **Mulch reduces overall watering maintenance.** It helps retain moisture, slows evaporation, and reduces run-off.
9. **Use smart watering tools such as:** rain gauges, moisture meters, Soil Moist® gel crystals in containers, soaker hoses in garden beds, rain barrels for water collection and lowering your water bill, watering cans with removable sprinkler heads to apply water directly to the roots, etc.