



How to Water

A. 7 THINGS TO CONSIDER:

1. What kind of plant is it?
2. Is it in a pot or in the ground?
3. If in the ground, how long has the plant been in the ground?
Newly planted = First two years (Trees first 3-4 years)
Established = After two years (Trees after 4 years)
4. What season is it? – How active is the plant? The more it is growing the more water it needs.
5. What kind of soil is it?
Clay = Difficult to get clay to absorb water, but holds water longer
Sand or Well-draining soil = Easily absorbs water, but doesn't hold it long
Shallow = will dry out faster than deep
6. What is the microclimate? Is it in the sun or shade? Windy or still? Low place or top of a hill? Shady, low areas retain water longer; sunny, windy, hilly areas dry out faster
7. How do I water?

B. HOW DO I WATER?

1. All of these recommendations are assuming the soil has been prepared properly for the type of plant, that there is proper mulch around non-xeric plants, and there is no rain. Whenever we get at least 1" of rain, start the watering schedule over again.
2. Get to know your soils in your microclimates. Test the soil moisture level before watering. Your finger is the best moisture meter. Using a trowel, if necessary, feel the soil to a depth of 5" – 10" to determine water needs. Deep watering = the soil is moist (like a wrung out sponge) 5" to 10" deep. Adjust watering time and amount accordingly.
3. **Containerized** – Depends on the size of the pot, material of the pot, the type of plant, and the type of soil. Smaller pots need water more often. Outdoor pots need more water than indoor. Pots in full sun need water more often than shade. Unglazed terra cotta pots need more water than plastic or glazed pottery. Water thoroughly making sure all soil is wet. Do not allow pot to sit in saucer of water more than a half hour. These recommendations are for outdoor plants. Do not water any xeric plants before a freeze.
 - a. Xeric – (assuming these are in a gritty, well-draining soil)
April through September: Once a week (some xeric plants prefer every 2 weeks)
October through early December and March: Every 2 weeks
Mid-December through February: Once a month or not at all.
 - b. Other
95° ↑: Daily or more often to prevent wilting
May through September: Every 2nd or 3rd day
October through April: Once every week or two
4. **In the Ground**
 - a. **Xeric** – (assuming these are in a gritty, well-draining soil; don't water before freeze).
 - i. Newly planted: Start with slightly damp soil. Don't water right away. After one week, water 1/week for 2 weeks.
April through September: Every two weeks
October through early December and March: Once a month
Mid-December through February: No watering

Xeric (continued)

ii. Established

March through September: Once a month

October through February: No watering

b. Native Perennials

i. Newly planted

95° ↑: Light watering daily, plus deep watering 1/week

May – September: deep watering once per week or two

October – April: deep watering once every two or three weeks

ii. Established

95° ↑: Once per week

May – September: deep watering once per week or two

October – April: deep watering once every two or three weeks

c. “Garden-variety” (Annuals, non-native perennials)

i. Newly planted

95° ↑: Light to medium watering daily, plus deep watering 1/week

May – September: deep watering once or twice per week

October – April: deep watering once every week or two

ii. Established

95° ↑: Light watering daily or every other day, plus deep watering 1/week

May – September: deep watering once or twice per week

October – April: deep watering once every week or two

d. Lawn

i. How? All *established* lawn needs water to a depth of 4 – 6” in the soil (= 1 – 1.5” measured in a tuna fish or cat food can) every 5 days during the growing season; Once every 3 – 4 weeks in the winter

ii. Newly planted sod (All varieties) – Water daily 1st 2 weeks; Every other day the next 2 weeks; Then on regular schedule

iii. Newly planted seed – Water lightly daily or more often until grass emerges; do not let seedbed surface dry out; Then every 2nd or 3rd day until the first mowing; Then on regular schedule

iv. Established – (All varieties except Buffalo & Turffalo) – Apply 1 – 1.5” water every 5 days

v. Established Buffalo or other native grasses

“Never water; Never mow” = grass will turn brown and go dormant, OR – To keep grass green = water when grass *begins* to look stressed (dull, gray-blue color); every 1 – 2 weeks in the summer; 1/month in the winter

vi. Established Turffalo –

95° ↑: Water 1/week

May – September: once every 10 days

October – April: once a month

e. Trees and Shrubs

i. First 2-3 years – Water root ball, plus surrounding soil at least 3’ – 4’ out

95° ↑: Light watering daily, plus deep watering 1/week

May – September: deep watering once per week or two

October – April: deep watering once every two or three weeks

ii. Established

See *Don Gardner’s Watering Guidelines for Trees*