WATERING GUIDE

Watering newly installed plantings can seem confusing and daunting. It's not a "one-size fits all" process. Each season has its own conditions to understand, including temperature, sun exposure, soil makeup and wind exposure.

- Am I over/under watering?
- How much water am I supposed to give each plant?
- How do I know when to water next?
- When can I stop watering?

You've got questions – this guide will help you care for your investment!

Immediately after planting

When you've completed the planting process, water your new plants thoroughly. Use an open-ended hose running on medium pressure – do not use a sprinkler. Based on the size of the root ball, imagine you are running water all the way through the roots. Water may spread along the surface. When this happens, stop, allow the water to seep through the soil and continue until you feel the roots are saturated appropriately.

Spring watering

Spring season starts cold and ends warm (sometimes hot!). Typically, it's also wet. Spring showers bring May flowers … right? If it's a rainy spring – think of the watering job as, "you're on call." Some seasons are wet, and nature will do a good job while it's cooler. But as it begins to warm up, you'll have to supplement.

Plants don't want to sit in a puddle. **Ideally, you will saturate a plant and it has a day or two to "air out" before it dries up.** The plant doesn't want to be dry and it doesn't want to drown either. **Check the soil.** Dig down around the root ball with your finger – about 3"-4" deep in the soil at the outer reach of the branches – to feel the consistency. How damp does it feel? What color is it? Drier soil will appear lighter brown and moist soil will be a darker shade.

Summer watering

Heat. Sun. Drought. Many gardeners will opt out on planting in the summer because of the challenges of watering. You don't have to shy away from it – if you can commit to the time it brings. Watering is crucial. Depending on the temperature and sun exposure, **expect to water every other day/every day** in a heat wave or drought. There are clues to watch for … light colored soil, wilting leaves, drooping flower buds. These cues are telling you the plant is thirsty. Rain may not be enough to thoroughly soak the plants. Check the soil in the morning. **Watering in the AM will help the plant get through the heat of the day.** (Watering the leaves is not necessary or recommended.) If you water it heavily, the plant should make it through the day and get relief through the night. Some plants may need an early afternoon drink as well.

Fall watering

Fall is a great time to plant! Plants are most easily transplanted in this season. The warm soil temps and cool nights encourage root development and reduce stress. **You will water more in the early portion of the fall and less as the season progresses.** The season can fluctuate between high/low temps or dry/wet conditions. Wind can be a factor to watch for. High winds can strip moisture from plants pretty quickly. Check your soil to determine when to water. Dig down with your finger about 3"-4" deep to feel the moisture of the soil. Once the plants have reached dormancy (when the leaves have fallen from trees), you can stop watering

Tools

Using the right tools makes watering easier and plant growth successful.

• **Hose** – This is the best way to water new plantings. It allows you to best target the soil area and regulate the amount of water.
• **On/off valve** – These fittings slip onto the end of the hose where you hold it, allowing you to easily turn the water on/off while you're watering.
• **Watering wands with shower head** – Handy to extend the reach of your hose, getting the water down closer to the soil. Great for hanging plants too!
• **Irrigation systems** – In-ground and drip irrigation systems are great for general maintenance of lawns and gardens. They are NOT the best tools for watering new plantings during their first season. It's better to water by hand, using a hose. Irrigation systems are a good supplement, but it's best not to rely on them as the sole source of hydration for new plantings.