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Deep Watering Method For Home Gardens

By Bill Watson

There are a number of watering methods that have proven to be effective in the home garden.

In this article, we will focus on one that emphasizes conservation and yet will promote lush and vigorous growth, no matter what varieties of plants you grow.

Promote Healthy Growth

The Deep Watering method has proven to save water and encourage plants to develop strong, active root systems.

It's basically very simple - you irrigate less often, say once every 1 to 2 weeks, although each time you irrigate more deeply.

For example, you have flowers or vegetables that have been in the ground for at least a month. When the plants have started to put out new "top" growth (new leaves or buds), you know they've acclimated to their environment.

Tip: Seedlings and fresh plantings (less than a month old), will always need more water until their root systems have started to expand and become established. Wait to start a deep watering program until your plantings start to show new growth. Even then you'll want to slowly introduce them to this system.

Tip: Plants in hot, sun-drenched areas of your garden, will generally need to be watered more often, but you can off-set this by choosing plants that are "drought tolerant." Cooler, shady areas will need much less water.

Take a few minutes to till or loosen the top one-inch of soil in the plant bed. Be careful around newer plantings, as some of the roots will be nearer the surface and will be fragile.

Deep watering will encourage the roots to go deep, looking for food and water, which is exactly what we want them to do. Loosening the top one inch of the soil will allow the water to penetrate and not run off.

Deep Watering Method For Home Gardens

There's no need to be too fussy about tilling at this point, all the "hard" work was done when you prepared the bed for planting and will carry you through the entire growing season.

Tip: A good water nozzle is one that breaks the water flow into multiple, gentle streams.

Tip: Adding a good mulch on top of your garden bed, about 1 to 2 inches thick, is a good idea when starting a deep watering program. A mulch will help in retaining moisture and will protect roots from temperature extremes. Also, as an added benefit, will help keep weeds down to a minimum.

Start watering at a point in your yard that you can work your way back to. Slowly work your way around your garden, making sure to thoroughly water each individual plant, and any open or unplanted area

around them.

In a typical 10' x 3' bed, you may spend 5 minutes watering, then slowly work your way around the rest of your garden.

Now you're done for about a week, depending upon the weather. As you condition your plants to a deep watering system you will slowly stretch the length of time between waterings.

Your goal is to drive the water deep into the ground, and thoroughly saturate the soil to about 12 to 14 inches in depth. This will create a reservoir of moisture below the roots.

As the upper part of the bed dries out the roots will naturally seek the water that's stored below them. This encourages a deeper root system which is healthier, and that is better able to tolerate low water conditions.

When you first start a deep watering program, you'll want to keep an eye on younger plants, and plants in hot areas of the garden.

If you notice plants starting to wilt, water them deeply again. Over time you will find that watering twice, or even once a month will be all an established plant needs, depending upon specific species or variety of plant.

Tip: Low-growing annuals like pansies will have naturally shallow root systems and although a deep watering program will encourage deeper roots, any plant with a shallow root system will naturally require more regular waterings.

You can off set this tendency by planting annuals in cooler areas of your garden or using taller plants to shade surrounding areas. In essence you're creating a small micro-climate to protect more sensitive plantings. Additionally, annuals generally need about 1 inch of water per week.

As with most gardening activities, you may need to adjust this process to suit your particular growing conditions.

Deep Watering has proven over time to save water, reduce maintenance, and still promote lush and vigorous growth throughout your garden or landscape.

Good Luck & Happy Gardening!

With over 20 years of gardening and landscaping experience, Bill now shares his tips and advice on creating and maintaining lush and healthy home gardens. Visit his website at

<http://www.your-healthy-gardens.com/>

How to Water Your Houseplants Wisely

By Kori Puckett

How to Water Your Houseplants Wisely by Kori Puckett

Over watering ranks first in causes of houseplant demise because it causes roots to rot. Most plants are tough so they can recover from under watering with only the loss of a few leaves -- unless you wait too long and pass the point of no return.

Watering schedules depend on the kind of houseplant, its size, container, and environment. No two plants have the same water requirements, so you'll need to know what your particular plant(s) require.

Generally, it's best to water during morning hours. Most flowering plants require more water than their non-flowering counterparts. Since the needs of individual plants vary greatly, you should research your houseplant's requirements.

Test dryness of soil by probing the top inch with your finger. Tapping the side of the pot also indicates the degree of wetness. If the tap sounds hollow, the plant needs water. If it sounds solid, wait a day or two to water. If a plant begins to wilt and its soil looks dry and cracked, it needs water immediately.

For plants that require moderate watering, allow 1/2 to 1-inch of soil to dry out before re-watering. If a plant needs light watering, let two-thirds of the soil dry out. For plants that need heavy watering, the surface should always be moist.

You can water in several ways. A quick and easy method is to water from the surface with a watering can. Use a long-spout

Deep Watering Method For Home Gardens

water can and water at room temperature. When water escapes through the bottom of a pot, the houseplant has had enough.

Pots also may be placed in a tray of water for about half an hour. This allows the soil to draw water in from drainage holes. Some plants, such as ferns, especially like this watering method.

During each watering, use enough water to completely soak the soil in the pot rather than simply wetting the surface. (Keep in mind when watering that hairy plants, such as African Violets, can be damaged if their leaves get wet).

Tap water is fine for plants, but it's a good idea to let the water stand in an open container overnight to allow it to come to room temperature and allow chlorine to evaporate. If your tap water has a high fluoride content, it is wise to use water from another source — spring, well, rain water, distilled water, or water that has collected in a dehumidifier. You also can add perlite or limestone to your plant's soil to neutralize fluorides.

More steps to easily care for your house plants can be found at <http://www.koripuckett.com/house-plant-care>



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