



Waterfacts 3

Watering flower and vegetable gardens.

Gardeners need to know how much water is enough to keep plants healthy. Several factors will help to determine your plantings' water needs, including soil type and rate of absorption, weather conditions, plant types, location, soil condition and depth of mulch. While water needs may vary, generally plants need about 2.5 cm (one inch of water) per week in the form of rainfall or irrigation.

The following tips may help ensure your plants are getting the correct amount of water without waste.

1. Use a rain gauge to find out how much water an inch per week is. Place the rain gauge in your garden and use it to measure not only rainfall but also the volume of water you are using during irrigation cycles. (For residents who have a water bill account number in the Victoria metropolitan area, call CRD Water Services to receive a FREE rain gauge).
2. Find out what type of soil you have. Different soils absorb water at different rates which can cause over or under watering. Sandy soils absorb water much faster than clay soils but also do not retain water and dry out much faster.
3. Lay down about 5 to 10cm (2" to 4") of mulch around plantings and garden areas. A fine textured mulch or soil conditioner such as bark, compost, leaf mulch, hay, wood chips should be used to help absorb and retain the moisture.
4. Saturate flower and vegetable gardens once or twice a week under normal weather conditions. This is ample moisture if you use at least 5 cm (two inches) of mulch.
5. Water uniformly.
6. If using a hose with a spray nozzle adjust the flow rate so water is entering at rate that the soil can absorb.
7. Water at the root of plants not in bare areas or into the air. Micro/drip systems are excellent for watering plants and gardens as water is delivered where it is needed at the root zone of plants.
8. Rethink your planting types. Some drought tolerant or native plants are adapted to our climate and require minimal watering to keep them healthy.

Do your part. 
Every drop counts!

CRD Water Services
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9. Don't mix your plantings. Make sure your plants are grouped together by moisture and light requirements. This ensures plants are receiving the amount of water they need.
10. Avoid heavy direct watering by hose which may wash away soils and nutrients exposing roots to pests and diseases.
11. Water plants early in the morning. Watering late in evening promotes disease.
12. Walk about your garden on a regular basis (once a week), after it has been watered. Look for areas that are still dry or which dry out too quickly. Check plants for unexpected purpling, wilting or poor growth of foliage. These are signs of drought, especially in August.
13. If ordering bulk soil ask that the organic matter content be increased by 25% for improved water and growing conditions.
14. Comply with the watering days and times of the CRD water conservation bylaw.



CRD Water Services

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The content of this fact sheet was reviewed for accuracy by an irrigation professional and a landscape designer.

 50% post-consumer waste