



Planting and Irrigation in Dry Weather Conditions

In bouts of dry weather, thoughts turn to conserving water in the garden. We have pulled together some handy hints to help you and your clients' garden watering practices.

- One of the most efficient ways to conserve water and reduce soil temperature around the roots is to apply a layer of mulch.
- Mulch helps to retain soil moisture around the root zones and protects them from extreme temperature.
- Mulch is best applied on moist soils after planting and watering to a depth of at least 5cm.
- Mulch can be applied in beds, borders and containers. Keep any mulch away from the plant stems.
- Apply mulch every 2 years or so to help conserve water and improve soil structure.
- Water conservation is paramount in hot weather conditions.
 - ▶ Irrigation is best applied either early in the morning or in the evening when less water is lost to evaporation in the heat of the day. Watering in the cooler hours saves on water wastage.
- Water directly to the soil surface under the leaf canopy where the root zone is for smaller plants.
- Remove any weeds or unwanted plants that are competing for water and nutrients from the plants you actually want to keep.
- Drip Irrigation is a great idea for newly installed planting as irrigation sprinklers can be placed directly at the base of the plant reaching the roots effectively and efficiently with little or no water wastage.
- Drip irrigation is surprisingly easy to install or you could try one of the starter kits. These are ideal for containers.
- When planting trees, add irrigation systems such as Root Rain or the Piddler Irrigation system. Both have protruding pipes that are installed when planting and are easy for your client to use when watering.
- Use Root Rain or the Piddler Irrigation system to aid watering and aid long term plant establishment.
- Root Rain and Piddler Irrigation systems apply water effectively in both directions around the rootball of the tree ensuring even distribution of water where it is needed most.
- The Piddler Irrigation system can also be used for straight runs/hedging planting.
- Leaky Pipe/Soaker Hose is an easy to install and simple solution to watering flower beds and hedges.
 - ▶ Lay the hose on the soil surface.
 - ▶ Pin in place using staples.
 - ▶ The water is evenly distributed by a myriad of tiny holes in the hose surface delivering water gradually along the hose length.
 - ▶ Reduces evaporation and keeps water waste to a minimum.
 - ▶ Made from high quality UV resistant material. Flexible.
 - ▶ Can be connected to a water timer for more efficient use.
 - ▶ Suitable for low flow rates. Operating pressure 0.5 - 2 bar.
- If plants have been in the ground for 5 years or more, there should be no need to irrigate as plants should be well established and able to source water as the root systems will have settled in well.
- We still recommend applying new layers of mulch every 2 - 3 years.

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