

Robledo Vista Nursery + Landscape Design

Resource Efficient Plants and Design

Irrigation Notes

These notes are intended as a general guide. Nothing can substitute for the regular inspection of plants and the irrigation system. Use common sense.

- The BEST way to water any plant is deeply and infrequently regardless of what kind of irrigation system, including hand watering. Deep watering encourages deep rooting. Deeply rooted plants are able to handle drought much better than shallowly rooted plants. Daily watering (except for newly planted plants) for short periods of time causes plants to develop shallow roots and makes them much more subject to drought stress. Deep infrequent irrigation is the goal.
- Winter/cool season watering (mid-November to mid-March): Water in the early afternoon to minimize freezing. Rain and snow can be misleading, so check soil to a depth of 12" for moisture. A soil probe or is useful for this task.
- Gradually adjust the irrigation schedule as needed.
- Become acquainted with your landscape, including the watering needs of both deep rooted plants (generally speaking, trees and shrubs) and shallow rooted plants (generally speaking, groundcovers, annuals, and perennials). Know your soil type with the understanding that clay soils hold water and are generally poorly draining and sandy soils dry out more quickly and have good drainage. Know your climate and microclimate and adjust watering to fit the season and the microclimates where the plants are located.
- As plants grow more drip emitters should be added to the system to adequately water the plants.
- Drip systems should be periodically checked (seasonally) to ensure that the systems are operating properly. Emitters can clog and may need to be cleaned or replaced.

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- Pressure reducers and filters should always be used on all zones of a drip irrigation system. Filters should be cleaned at least once a year.
- Irrigation controllers that have a 31-day (or 365-day) calendar and dual programs are best. Controllers that have a 7-day calendar force you to water at least once a week. Irrigation controllers with a 7-day calendar can always be turned off and run manually at the desired interval.
- Under watering young or newly planted plants, especially during dry, hot periods, is harmful and can kill plants.
- Overwatering causes many problems for native and xeriscape plants. Overwatering causes rank plant growth which requires pruning, can lead to crown rot and root rot, and wastes water.

Recommended Irrigation Schedule

Note that these guidelines were developed for properly designed and installed drip irrigation systems.

High Temp	Newly Planted (First ~30 days)	Interval	Establishing (First ~2 years)	Interval	Established (After ~2 years)	Interval
< 65°	10 - 15 minutes	Every 3 - 5 days	20 - 30 minutes	Every 6 - 10 days	45 - 60 minutes	Every 30 - 45 days
65° to 90°	20 - 30 minutes	Every 2 days	30 - 45 minutes	Every 4 - 6 days	60 - 75 minutes	Every 3 - 4 weeks
> 90°	30 - 45 minutes	Daily	45 - 90 minutes	Every 2 - 4 days	90 - 120 minutes	Every 10 days - 3 weeks