

Watering

CARE GUIDE





We often wonder how much we should be watering our plants in our garden and indoor space. Not all plants have the same needs and many a plant can be rescued and a lot of water saved by sticking to a few basic watering guidelines.

It is very important to get to know your garden and the needs of specific plants.

GENERAL WATERING PRINCIPLES

- Water **early morning** or, if not possible, **late afternoon**.
- Water less often, but **more deeply** to encourage a stronger root system.
- Water **gently and gradually** to allow water to penetrate the soil.
- Water **on the ground** around the root area, rather than on the plant.
- Create a **basin** around larger plants and beds to contain the water.
- Water around the **whole plant** to ensure an evenly developed root system.
- Ensure that garden soil or potting medium is **rich** in organic matter and that it is **well-draining**.
- Know what **soil type** you have and adjust watering accordingly.
- Watering needs will **vary** according to season, temperature and wind.
- Invest in a **rain gauge** to ensure that the garden has received sufficient rain.
- Plants on the **north-and west** facing side will need more frequent watering.
- Pay **attention** to beds next to high walls, fences and roof overhang.

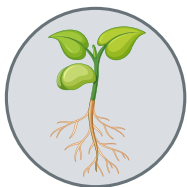
Some plants naturally wilt during the hottest times of the day, but do not need urgent watering. Check these later in the day to see if they have recovered.

HOW MUCH WATERING?



NEW PLANTS

Water new plants as soon as you arrive home. If you can't plant them immediately, water every day or even twice a day. After planting, continue to water on a daily basis for the first few months until the plants are established.



SEEDLINGS

Seedlings still in seed trays must be watered twice daily and not be allowed to dry out at all. After planting, water seedlings every day and even twice a day during hot or windy weather if the top layer of soil starts drying out.



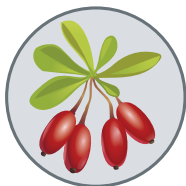
GARDEN BEDS & LAWNS

A general rule of thumb is 20-30mm 2-3 times per week in high water zones and lawns, 15mm for medium water zones and 12mm for low water zones during summer months. This can be halved during winter. Certain lawn types required more watering than others and dormant lawn requires no watering.



VEGETABLES & HERBS

Vegetable crops must be kept moist but not waterlogged, especially while they are developing their flowers and fruits. Underwatering will result in inferior crops in fruiting vegetables and leafy veg might run to seed.



FRUIT & BERRIES

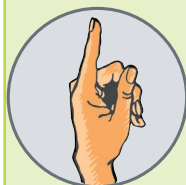
As with vegetables, keep fruit trees and berries moist while they are forming their flowers and fruits. When trees and shrubs go dormant in winter only water every fortnight.



PLANTS IN CONTAINERS & HANGING BASKETS

Use a high quality, well-draining potting soil and improve the water retention capacity by adding water retention granules or cubes, vermiculite, perlite or peat to the soil.

Plants in pots & baskets need more frequent watering than those in beds. Frequency of watering will depend on the seasons (winter / summer), position of the pots (sun / shade), and the type of pot it is planted in (clay or plastic), rainfall and wind.



Do the 'Finger Test'

This is the easiest way to check if your pot plants need watering: insert your finger or a wooden stick 3 - 4cm into the potting soil. If it comes out clean or with soil that is dry to the touch, it's time to water. If it's dirty or with soil that is moist to the touch, you can hold off watering for a bit.



INDOOR PLANTS

Frequency depends on:

- type of plant
- the position - bright, medium or low light
- the type and size of the pot – ceramic, plastic or terracotta
- potting medium
- season and temperature of the room and house.

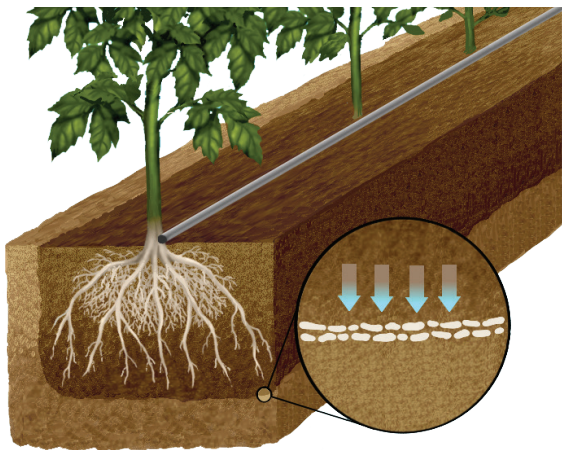


Get to know your indoor plants and water them individually.

BONSAI

Bonsai need to be checked and watered on a daily basis.

COMMON WATERING METHODS



Soaker hoses and drip irrigation is the most efficient method and have the benefit of reducing evaporation and allowing water to seep into the soil where the plant needs it around the roots. It also keeps water off the leaves which prevents fungal disease and leaf burn.



Automatic sprinkler systems are very effective and zone specific if managed properly. Choose one with a rain sensor to save water during the rainy season. Re-adjust sprinkler systems at the start of a new season. Programme your system to irrigate within water restriction periods and when evaporation is low.



Hand-held hose pipes with stop-valve sprays are the most common of watering methods and are ideal for individual deep watering of certain trees and shrubs, as well as for smaller gardens and hard to reach places.



Watering cans are a handy and water savvy way to water seedlings and pot plants.



SIGNS OF OVERWATERING

1. The plant is wilting, although the soil is wet.
2. Leaves, especially the tips, turn brown or yellow and soft to the touch.
3. The plant might drop its leaves.
4. Roots are soft or rotten and stems might feel spongy.
5. Mildew or other fungal diseases might appear on the soil.



SIGNS OF UNDERWATERING

1. Leaves turn brown, especially around the edges, and dry or crunchy.
2. The plant may drop its leaves.
3. The plant doesn't flower or drops its flowers.
4. Growth is stunted.
5. The root balls and stems are dry or dead.



Apply **hydrozoning** principles where plants are grouped together according to their water requirements.



Cnr. Beyers Naudé Drive & Ysterhout Ave, Randpark Ridge,
Randburg • Tel: 011 792 5616

• info@lifestyle.co.za     • www.lifestyle.co.za