



REDUCING WATER USE IN THE GARDEN

In a water wise garden the method used to deliver water to plants is very important. You want plants to get the most benefit from the amount of water that is used. When and how long you should water your garden will depend on the soil type, type of plants and possible water restrictions

incorporate water wise design principles

- Use fertiliser sparingly as over use increases the need for water. Use a slow release fertiliser that is not soluble in water
- Plant natives that are suited to your local climate - they require less water and fertiliser and are inherently drought resistant
- A layer of mulch around 50mm thick on garden beds and around trees prevents over 70% of moisture evaporation from out of the soil. It will improve the structure and fertility of the soil, and its ability to hold moisture
- When creating a new garden or renovating an existing one, prepare the soil properly – don't plant into a soil that is too sandy, boggy or primarily clay. Do a soil test and remineralise and improve soils as required
- Group plants together according to their water needs (hydrozoning) to prevent over or under watering
- Use water storing crystals when planting to 'hold' water around the new plant and increase water absorption
- You can apply a soil wetter in the spring so soil doesn't become 'hydrophobic'. Sandy soil, for example, is especially hydrophobic, and a soil wetter strips away the soil's waxy coating which repels water.

watering in during the establishment phase

Watering in during the establishment phase depends upon the species, soil type and current weather conditions. Always check the soil before watering as environmental factors such as wind, sun and rainfall will have a major impact. You may think your plants need watering every second day, but this is often not the case

- In winter soil stays moist for longer due to cooler temperatures and heavy dews, so check the soil first so you don't over water and drown your new plants
- During hot and dry conditions with no rain, watering of new plantings should be undertaken approximately every 3 days for the first month then weekly for the second month, continuing for around a year
- In Autumn or Winter, watering every week to 10 – 12 days should suffice
- Be careful not to over water in clay soil as clay traps moisture and too much water will cause roots to rot. Water once every week to 10 days for the first Summer, then less frequently after that unless drought conditions apply
- Plants in sandy or loamy soil may need watering once a week. In very hot weather, water every 4 - 5 days for the first month
- Imported loamy soil that has been placed on top of clay can cause problems when the clay below holds moisture underneath the plant and can rot new roots. Mulch well to retain soil moisture close to the surface rather than increase the watering regime

