



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
Colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences & Family and Consumer Sciences

Watering 101: Just the Right Amount, and Never Too Much

Gardens, lawns, trees and shrubs feel the burn of inevitable dry times in broiling Georgia summers. To help your landscape thrive, you have to quench your plants' thirst until rain comes.

University of Georgia horticulturists say vegetable crops need about an inch of water per week from rain, irrigation or both. To monitor how much your plants get, keep a rain gauge near the garden or check with the local weather bureau for rainfall amounts. Supplement rainfall with irrigation water if needed.

During dry times, a single thorough, weekly watering of one to two inches (65 to 130 gallons per 100 square feet) is enough for most soils. Wet soils five to six inches deep each time you water and don't water again until the top few inches begin to dry out. The average garden soil will store two to four inches of water per foot of depth.

If rain doesn't come and the plants are suffering, it's time to irrigate. You can use a sprinkler can, a garden hose with a fan nozzle or spray attachment, portable lawn sprinklers, a perforated plastic soaker hose, drip or trickle irrigation or a semiautomatic drip system.

The soaker hose is probably the least expensive and easiest to use. It's a fibrous hose that allows water to slowly seep out along its length. Hoses perforated with tiny holes do the same thing.

An emitter-type system works best for small raised beds or container gardens. Short tubes, or emitters, extend from a main water supply hose and directly deposit water at the roots of selected plants. This is generally the most expensive form of irrigation and the hardest to set up. But, it's efficient as the weeds don't get watered and not much water is lost through evaporation.

Source:

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