



Waterwise Gardens

To get the most garden for the least amount of water, be water-wise.

Right Place – where in your garden will it be planted

- Use hydrozones - grouping plants with similar water needs together is more efficient, as plants are less likely to be over or under-watered.
- In a windy area, plants will need more water than if they are sheltered.
- Drainage — Soil type determines the way water drains
 - ◇ Because clay particles are so small, water will drain through clay soils much more slowly than sandy soils. Clay soils are very hard and compacted when dry.
 - ◇ Water drains quickly through coarse sandy soils.
 - ◇ Choose plants that will be happy in the type of soil that you have.

Right Plant – Plants that need little supplemental water and/or are drought-tolerant

- Drought-tolerant native plants are good choices for water-wise gardening. They need water the first 2-3 years, but after that need little additional water.
- Smaller plants tend to have lower water requirements than larger plants.
- Lawns require regular watering; consider groundcovers instead of lawns for a green look and low-water use.

Right Care – Plants' water needs vary with the weather and season.

- Check plants regularly, even if you use an automatic watering system.
- Check soil moisture using a long screwdriver or metal rod.
 - ◇ Wait about an hour after you have finished watering, push the probe into the soil. It will go into moist soil fairly easily, and stop or be difficult to push through dry soil.
- Apply water slowly, deeply, infrequently, and directly to the root zone so the water soaks in rather than runs off.

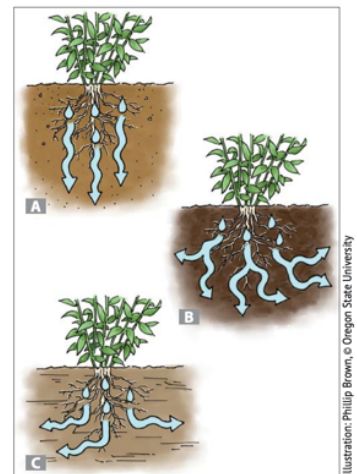


Figure 5. Sandy (A), loamy (B), and clay (C) soil types store and disperse water in different ways.



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- The frequency and depth of watering needed depends on the plant and type of soil.
 - ◇ Water more frequently for shorter times in sandy soil and less frequently and longer in clay soils.
 - ◇ Lawns need about 1-2 inches of water once per week, depending upon the type of grass and weather.
 - ◇ Shrubs should be watered to a depth of 12-18 inches.
- Check the Weekly Water Number for how much to water from Spring to Fall.
- How to water
 - ◇ Avoid watering leaves and stems to prevent disease.
 - ◇ Choose methods that deliver water directly to the plant base:
 - * hand watering with a hose or watering can
 - * drip/emitters
 - * soaker hoses
 - ◇ Avoid overhead sprinklers that cause water loss through evaporation
- Water wisely
 - ◇ Apply mulch around the plant
 - * use organic material such as compost, bark dust or bark chips; avoid rubber mulches made from recycled tires that may leach toxins into the soil.
 - ◇ The best time to water is in the mornings; avoid watering mid-day due to evaporation or at night to decrease risk of disease from plant foliage staying wet.



Right Help – sources for more information about water-wise gardening

- Master Gardeners <https://bit.ly/MetroMG>
- “Water-efficient plants for the Willamette Valley” <https://bit.ly/waterefficientplants>
- Conserving Water in Your Yard and Garden (see Water wisely, pages 3-4) <https://bit.ly/ConservingGardenWater>
- Weekly Water Number <https://bit.ly/WeeklyWaterNumber>
- “Watering Trees and Shrubs: Simple Techniques for Efficient Landscape Watering” <https://bit.ly/plantswatering>

More information:

