

## Watering Tips for Perennials

**How to water newly planted perennials:** Once you've planted your perennial, water it with the garden hose on a slow stream until you're confident that the entire root ball has been thoroughly saturated. Check the soil of the root ball every day, feeling with your finger down to a depth of 2-3 inches. If the root area is moist, don't water. If it's dry, water the entire root ball until it's thoroughly soaked. Watering by hand is recommended during this time, as a sprinkler system may not always cover the entire root ball. The frequency of watering will vary depending on how cool or warm the weather is. In Colorado, the weather can go from very cool to baking hot in a matter of days, so keep this in mind when watering. It will take anywhere from 3 weeks to an entire summer for perennials to become established. Careful and thorough watering the entire first summer is recommended.

**How to water established perennials:** Well established perennials should be watered in much the same way as newly planted ones. This means each time you water them, make sure the entire root area is thoroughly watered. The frequency will be less than a newly planted perennial, however. Most perennials will need to be watered about 2-3 times a week during the warm summer months. Xeric or drought tolerant perennials may only need to be watered once every week to 10 days, with more frequent watering during really hot, dry weather. If you're relying on your sprinkler system to water your perennial beds, set the timer so that water is applied for 10-15 minutes on, 15 minutes off (during which time the water soaks into the soil), then water again for 10-15 minutes. This way, water is used efficiently and runoff is limited. You'll also need to water less often using this method. Our perennial experts will be able to guide you as to which perennials are drought tolerant. We also have signage which specifies which perennials need more water, and which can grow with less. As a general rule, shade perennials prefer regular, thorough water.

**How to water perennial grasses:** Grasses need special treatment when they are first planted, and during the first summer. Most of them will need to be watered deeply and thoroughly every day after planting, especially if the weather is very warm. (If planting during May and the weather is cool, you'll need to check the soil before watering) After 3-4 weeks, you can start watering every 2-3 days, but continue to soak the entire root ball each time you water. Regular, deep applications of water need to continue for the entire summer and fall during the plant's first year, even for drought tolerant grasses. In subsequent summers, you'll be able to water less often, because the grass has been well established.

**Winter watering:** Watering your perennials during winter is a good idea because we can have extended dry periods during winter. If there hasn't been any rain or snow for 3-4 weeks, and temperatures have been on the warm side or it's been windy, or both, you'll need to water. Pick a day when the temperature is above 45 degrees, and get out your garden hose. Apply a gentle stream of water to the root area of each perennial, or you can use a small sprinkler to water the bed. Do this during the warmest part of the day so that the water will soak in before nightfall.