

## Tips for Watering Annuals

This material has been adapted from the University of Minnesota Extension.

Knowing how to water your plants is vital to their success. There are no hard and fast rules for watering garden beds or pots since conditions can change rapidly and care is dependent on a specific set of circumstances. If there's one thing new annual owners should know, it's to check the wetness of the soil often and respond appropriately. Watering annuals can be difficult to master, but with some guidance and the right set of tools you'll be on the path to success.

### What to Water

#### Position of Garden Beds and Pots

Pay attention to where your annuals are located in your yard. If a garden bed or pot is always in shade, you may not need to water as frequently. If a garden bed or pot is exposed to the sun for most of the day, you'll probably notice the soil drying out much quicker than other areas in your yard. Adjust your watering for each specific location in your yard.

#### Soil Type for Garden Beds

The Twin Cities metro has two different types of natural soil—heavy (clay) or light (sandy/loamy). Generally speaking, heavy soil takes longer to dry out, so less frequent watering is necessary. Light soil dries out faster, so more frequent watering is needed.

**Note that this does not apply for annual pots.**

### When to Water

It's best to water your garden beds and pots in the early morning. This allows the plants' roots to soak up the moisture and the leaves to dry, ultimately reducing foliar disease. The truest way to tell when your plants need to be watered is by feeling the soil in the garden bed or pot. If the soil is dry, that's your cue to water. A moisture meter can be a useful tool in helping determine if it's the right time to water.

### Signs Your Plants Need Water

To determine if watering is necessary, you should first feel the soil. If it feels bone dry, your plants probably need to be watered. But if you're still unsure, look at the plant. Does the plant have wilted leaves? Is it droopy? Are the flowers starting to lose their rich, bright colors? If the answer is yes, it's time to water your plants. If you still have some doubt after doing these tests, use a trowel to dig into the top 2–3 inches of soil. If this top layer is dry, your plants need to be watered.

### How to Water

When you've determined it's time to water your annuals, make sure to water at the base of the plant, closest to the roots, to avoid your plant's foliage from becoming diseased. Water deeply and less often to promote deeper, healthier root growth.

If you have an irrigation system, ensure that it's functioning properly and that it's positioned to water your garden beds and/or pots. Adjust its settings accordingly, paying attention to your plants' needs. If you don't have an irrigation system, a soaker hose is a useful tool that will help you water your plants at the root level. **Bachman's Garden Maintenance recommends checking your newly planted garden beds and/or pots every other day for the first week to better understand your plants' needs.**

**Still have questions? See us online or give us a call.**

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