



GARDENING BY THE MOON

IRRIGATION FACT SHEET

Submitted by

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Now is the time to turn your irrigation controller **off** if you have not already done so and leave it in the off position until warm weather returns. If your controller is on same setting as when you moved in, and you have been in your home for several months, follow the watering for established plants guidelines below. Here are some important irrigation facts about water usage for your landscape.

Fact 1 – Water Efficient Landscaping: Plants on the approved plant list are water efficient, well adapted, native Texas plants that perform well in north Texas climatic conditions. Planting techniques such as soil preparation, drip and spray irrigation and mulching are designed to provide optimum plant growth with reduced irrigation. Reducing water use in the landscape is a vital part of the overall planning, design and strategy for residents.

Fact 2 – Water and Oxygen: All plants need water and oxygen in the root zone to survive. It is important to balance the use of adequate water for plant growth but also allow time for soil to breath between watering so soil does not become water-logged. In Texas, more plants are killed from overwatering rather than not enough water.

Fact 3 – Watering Needs: Plant water needs vary depending on direct sun exposure, amount of shade, temperature, humidity, wind, soil and rain. The best way to determine water needs is to watch for plant stress – wilting of leaves and/or yellowing of leaves. You can also determine water needs by probing the soil to a depth of 2 to 4 inches with your fingers to check for soil moisture.

Fact 4 – Optimum Water Use: It is best to water in the early morning hours to avoid plant disease and when water loss through evaporation is minimal. Do not water between the hours of 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. When watering, apply water with multiple run times to avoid runoff into streets. Water as infrequently as possible, but water thoroughly at each application. Soak the soil to encourage deep root system growth to help plants better tolerate drought conditions and stress due to hot temperatures. Well rooted plants will use water efficiently stored in the soil.

Fact 5 – Watering of New Landscape: How new plants are watered will affect how plants survive. Water guidelines for **new plantings** should be as follows:

- Thoroughly water plants after planting.
- Make sure all plantings are mulched to reduce evaporation of water from around root balls.
- Water all newly planted landscaping every other day for the first four weeks. Run times will vary in each yard due to location and amount of sun or shade. Soils should be kept moist to a depth of 6 to 12 inches or throughout the root zone for plant establishment.
- Transition watering from every other day to two times per week after 4 weeks. Transition to watering for established landscape as soon as possible.

Fact 6 – Watering of Established Landscape: Water guidelines for established plantings should be as follows:

- Turn off your irrigation system during periods of rain.
- Landscape water use depends upon the climatic conditions and soil moisture.
- Replenish mulch yearly to reduce evaporation and water use around root systems and planting beds.
- Water so soil is moist to a depth of 6 to 12 inches so plants are more resilient to drought conditions and stress due to hot temperatures.
- Check irrigation settings and soil moisture throughout the year and make adjustments as needed depending on plant's water needs.