

# Water Sparingly Water Deep!

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Water Sparingly Water Deep! This is a good idea not just during a drought, but helps plants grow healthier by encouraging the roots to grow deep into the soil and at the same time dry out between waterings. When the roots develop deeply into the soil it helps them access water during dry periods. When the roots are allowed to dry out in between water events it helps prevent root diseases. Additionally, less watering prevents the leaching of nitrogen and other nutrients. Nitrogen contributes to the darker green color that healthy plants maintain. The same is true for lawns and landscape plants. In our garden, where we have a trickle irrigation system and landscape fabric. We are watering at about 5 day intervals and using enough water to penetrate down about a foot into the soil. We adjust the water amount based on natural rainfall, so that if the soil is already moist we delay watering until it is needed. The landscape fabric does “breathe”, but reduces water loss at the soil surface. To help us determine when to water next we watch the plants for the first sign of wilting which indicates that the roots cannot pull enough water through the roots to compensate for water lost through the leaves. If it is a warm/hot day and you know you have enough water, then additional watering is not required. In this situation if you want to cool the plants down and reduce the wilting, you can spray the leaves with water just until they are wet and utilize the practice of evaporative cooling. This can be

repeated at intervals during the day. This practice is usually not done after 4:00 PM to prevent the plant from going into the night with wet leaves. Wet leaves at night encourages plant leaf and stem diseases.