

# Watering Guidelines for the Rogue Valley

by Shooting Star Nursery

[www.roguevalleynursery.com](http://www.roguevalleynursery.com)

## **If you don't read anything else, read this:**

This is advice based on what has worked for us and our customers but as with all landscaping, conditions vary and good observation and understanding of your particular site is necessary. Adjustments must be made based on site conditions. Shooting Star Nursery is not liable for any watering mishaps.

### **1. Irrigation Schedules-**

**-Frequent, shallow watering only encourages shallow root systems (what is good for lawns is not good for trees)**

**-Even if it is 100 degrees out, do not water twice a day or even every day, the plants can't take up that much water, they shut down when it gets very hot. Most plants need a period to dry out between waterings.**

**-Make sure the plant has been well watered before it is planted and the surrounding soil has been watered so the plant isn't going in to a dry hole. Water deeply right after planting.**

- For most **drought tolerant plants**- on average: water deeply every 2-3 days for first 2-4 weeks, then can go to every 3-4 days. After 1<sup>st</sup> year once a week can often be enough.
- If weather is cooler or there is heavy clay the plants need water less often
- Make sure watering times are long enough- at least an hour for a deep soak. Sometime multiple start times will ensure water is soaking in.
- Most perennials are fine with one gallon per hour dripper, most drought tolerant shrubs can handle 1 GPH or 2 emitters of 1/2 GPH
- Larger shrubs could use 2 drippers on either side of at least 1-2 GPH for each side
- 4" plants may need some supplemental hand watering to get them off to a good start in hotter weather. You may not want to increase watering times just to cover the 4" plants at the risk of overwatering the larger plants on the same zone.
- For **non-drought tolerant plants**, on average, water deeply every 2-3 days for first 2-4 weeks, then can go to every 3-4 days. After 1<sup>st</sup> year, twice a week can be enough as long as it gets deep soaks.
- **Trees** need watering with multiple drips around the root zone
- Trees need a good deep soak upon planting and then on average a deep soak for an hour or two once a week through the first summer
- Many trees once established need a long, deep soak every two weeks, especially fruit trees which don't like wet feet
- Long, deep soaks are needed to encourage roots growing down deep to reach water
- Most trees do not like getting watered every day, and ideally want to be on a different schedule than shrubs and perennials and lawns.

**Want more details? Keep reading!**

## **2. Irrigation Zones**

- Ideally there should be as many irrigation zones as possible to accommodate different site needs and plant needs
- Trees should be on their own watering schedule- less frequent and longer watering times than the shrubs and perennials if possible
- **Lawns should always be on their own watering schedule**
- Drought tolerant areas should be a different schedule than areas that need more water

## **3. Soil Prep & Understanding Your Soil**

- Determine how well draining the soil is- more clay usually means less watering or more infrequent watering
- Adding compost, mycorrhizae and humic acid can really open up clay soils or enrich decomposed granite soils
- Raising up planting beds and planting high can help with drainage
- To determine soil type- Dig hole, fill with water, see how long it takes to drain. Anything that still has water in the hole after an hour or so will tend to be clay
- Don't over amend your soil for trees- adding some compost can help but they also need to get used to the native soil.

## **4. Right Plant for Right Place**

- Make sure drought tolerant plants are grouped together for best use of watering zones
- Natives can be drought tolerant but need to be sited correctly based on their preferred microclimate

## **5. Proper Planting**

- Score roots on most perennials and shrubs to open them up
- Dig a proper hole- twice as wide is ideal and match soil line of plant to soil line of planting bed
- Make sure mulch doesn't cover up crown/stem of plant
- Make sure drips aren't right on top of crown/stem, place them over root zone of plant on either side
- Make sure plants in pots have been watered before planting and water in plants with a hose on a slow drip as you are planting
- Ideally soil has been watered before planting as well

## **6. Observation after Planting**

- After watering schedules have been established, visit the site during the first week to see if the schedule is making sense for the site
- Check the soil moisture at least few inches under the mulch to determine if the soil is staying too moist, it usually needs to dry out a bit between waterings
- Check the soil moisture a day before the irrigation is supposed to come on to make sure it even needs to and adjust frequency accordingly
- Check the irrigation schedule after a month to see if needs adjusted, dial back watering frequency once plants have started to be established
- Make sure not to over water during heat spells- plants often take up less water during heat spells because they shut down. You are in danger of drowning them.