

# WATERING TIPS



- **Let the soil dry out a little** *in established gardens*. Waterlogged soil promotes fungal growth and suffocates plants.
  - **Wilt** can be a sign of heat stress, disease, or dry conditions.
  - **Dig about 3 inches** into the soil to decide whether to water.
- **When you water, water deeply**. Roots will not grow deeply in soil that is wet only on the top. Your plants will become dependent on surface moisture, which evaporates quickly.
- **Know your plants**. Some plants prefer drier conditions. Some require more water at critical stages, such as when flowering. *During germination and the first few weeks of growth, keep the soil evenly moist.*
- **Try to keep foliage dry** by watering low, at the base of plants, to prevent diseases.
- **Use 2-4 inches of mulch** such as straw or bark to (1) slow evaporation, (2) add organic matter, (3) protect plant roots from temperature extremes, and (4) prevent growth of competitive weeds. *Keep mulch away from the stems of plants.*
- **Morning watering** is best for gardens. (1) It gives plants time to take up water before the heat of the day. (2) Less water is lost to evaporation. And (3) it allows foliage to dry sufficiently.
- **Consider weather conditions**. High humidity, cooler temperatures, and little wind reduce the need for watering.
- **BE GENTLE!** A jet stream of water washes away soil, exposes roots, and damages the soil structure, important for the intake of oxygen and water.

