IRRIGATION FACT SHEET

by Dr. Robert E. Moon

Fact 1—Water-Efficient Landscaping: Landscaping is a significant part of a community's overall plan. Plants on the approved plant list are water-efficient, well-adapted native Texas plants that thrive in the climatic conditions of North Texas. Planting techniques, including soil preparation, drip and spray irrigation, and mulching, are designed to promote optimal plant growth while minimizing irrigation requirements. Reducing water use in the landscape is vital to homeowners' overall planning, design, and strategy.

Fact 2 – Water and Oxygen: All plants require water and oxygen in the root zone to survive. It is essential to balance adequate water for plant growth and allow time for the soil to breathe between watering, so the soil does not become waterlogged. In Texas, more plants are killed from overwatering than from insufficient water.

Fact 3 – Watering Needs: The watering needs of plants vary depending on several factors, including direct sun exposure, shade, temperature, humidity, wind, soil type, and rainfall. The best way to determine a plant's water needs is to watch for signs of stress, such as wilting or yellowing leaves. You can also assess 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 minimize plant disease and when water loss through evaporation is at a minimum. Do not water between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. When watering, apply water in multiple runs 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, helping plants tolerate drought and stress from hot temperatures. Well-rooted plants will use water efficiently, as it is stored in the soil.

Fact 5 – Watering of New Landscape: The method of watering new plants will significantly impact their survival.

Water guidelines for new plantings should be as follows:

- Thoroughly water plants after planting.
- Ensure all plantings are mulched to reduce water evaporation 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 the 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.
- After four weeks, transition from watering every other day to twice a week. Transition to watering of the established landscape as soon as possible.

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

- 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 the soil to a depth of 6 to 12 inches to keep it moist. This will make the plants more resilient to drought conditions and stress caused by high temperatures.

- Check irrigation settings and soil moisture throughout the year and adjust based on the plant's water needs.
- Refer to the following chart for monthly controller settings and run times.

Your irrigation system should ideally be switched to the OFF position from October through April/ May, depending on your local climate. The following run times in those months will only apply during periods of drought. These suggested settings and run times are general guidelines. They may need to be adjusted for individual landscape conditions, soil types, rainfall patterns, climatic conditions, and city watering restrictions. Run times can be broken into multiple runs to prevent runoff.

Month	Run Times	Controller Setting
January	Spray Heads – 12 -20 minutes Rotor Heads – 30-45 minutes Bubbler Heads – 5-10 minutes Drip – 30-45 minutes	Controller off
February	Spray Heads – 12 -20 minutes Rotor Heads – 30-45 minutes Bubbler Heads – 5-10 minutes Drip – 30-45 minutes	Set to run one time every 2 weeks
March	Spray Heads – 12 -20 minutes Rotor Heads – 30-45 minutes Bubbler Heads – 5-10 minutes Drip – 30-45 minutes	Set to run one time every 7-10 days
April	Spray Heads – 12 -20 minutes Rotor Heads – 30-45 minutes Bubbler Heads – 5-10 minutes Drip – 30-45 minutes	Set to run one time every 7-10 days
May	Spray Heads – 12 -20 minutes Rotor Heads – 30-45 minutes Bubbler Heads – 5-10 minutes Drip – 30-45 minutes	Set to run one time every 7-10 days
June	Spray Heads – 12 -20 minutes Rotor Heads – 30-45 minutes Bubbler Heads – 5-10 minutes Drip – 30-45 minutes	Set to run 1 or 2 times per week
July	Spray Heads – 12 -20 minutes Rotor Heads – 30-45 minutes Bubbler Heads – 5-10 minutes Drip – 30-45 minutes	Set to run 2 times per week

August	Spray Heads – 12 -20 minutes Rotor Heads – 30-45 minutes Bubbler Heads – 5-10 minutes Drip – 30-45 minutes	Set to run 1 or 2 times per week
September	Spray Heads – 12 -20 minutes Rotor Heads – 30-45 minutes Bubbler Heads – 5-10 minutes Drip – 30-45 minutes	Set to run 1 time per week
October	Spray Heads – 12 -20 minutes Rotor Heads – 30-45 minutes Bubbler Heads – 5-10 minutes Drip – 30-45 minutes	Set to run one time every 7-10 days
November	Spray Heads – 12 -20 minutes Rotor Heads – 30-45 minutes Bubbler Heads – 5-10 minutes Drip – 30-45 minutes	Set to run 1 time every 2 weeks
December	Spray Heads – 12 -20 minutes Rotor Heads – 30-45 minutes Bubbler Heads – 5-10 minutes Drip – 30-45 minutes	Controller off

Note: The above guidelines serve as suggestions and best practices; however, continue to monitor your soil by probing for adequate soil moisture. Adjust your irrigation system accordingly if you experience wet or dry areas in your yard. Often, hand-watering is a loophole for city watering restrictions, but please be aware of your city's watering guidelines.

Plants that Attract Pollinators, Hummingbirds & Butterflies

Alyssum, 'Lobularia maritima'
Basil
Black-Eyed Susan, 'Rudbeckia sp'
Catmint, 'Nepeta sp' 'Walker's Low'
Coneflower, 'Rudbeckia sp'
Coral Honeysuckle
Coreopsis, 'Coreopsis sp'
Cosmos, 'Cosmos sp'
Gaillardia, 'Gaillardia sp'
Lavender, 'Lavendula sp'
Lemon Mint, 'Monarda annus'
Liatris, 'Liatris sp'
Mexican Hat, Ratibida columnaris'
Milkweed, 'Asclepias sp'
Moss Verbena, 'Verbena tenuisecta'
Oregano, Origanum sp'
Rocket Larkspur, 'Delphinium ajacis'
Salvia (all perennial species)
Standing Cypress, 'Ipomopsis rubra'
Sunflower, 'Helianthus sp'
Tickseed, 'Coreopsis lanceolata'
Verbenia, 'Verbena sp'
Yarrow, 'Achillea sp'
Zinnia, 'Zinnia elegans'

May Night Salvia

Salvia Greggii

Uptick Coreopsis

Walker's Low Catmint

Alyssum

Standing Cypress

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