






Native Plant Watering Guide

How do you water native plants?
With *infrequent*, but *deep* soaks. Plus refreshing “sprinkles” during the summer.

What is a Deep Soak?
When the water penetrates the ground 14-20", equivalent to a 1.5-2" rain storm.

What is a Refreshing Sprinkle?
Running your sprinklers or a shower hose over your plants and the surrounding soil in the late afternoon or evening for 5 - 10 minutes to rinse off the leaves and cool the garden during very warm/dry periods.

| Timeline | Deep Soak Frequency |
|---|---|
|  <p>At the Time of Planting</p> | Soak the hole before you plant, then give a 1 gallon plant at least 5 gallons of water. The first soak is the most important, make sure it's very deep! |
|  <p>1-4 Weeks</p> | 1-2X per week |
|  <p>1-3 Months</p> | 1X per week |
|  <p>3-24 Months</p> | 1-2X per month (Water-loving plants, like ferns, may need weekly watering) |
|  <p>Established (2-3 years)</p> | As needed. Examples: Not enough rain. Surrounding area is hardscape. Plant is not in its natural climate zone. Before a heat-wave. To keep semi-dormant plants a little greener. Plant is water-loving. |

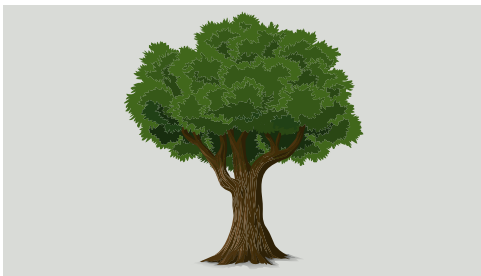
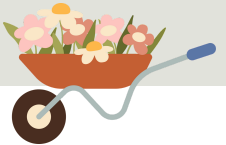
Hand water, sprinklers or drip?

| Method | Pros | Cons | Recommendations |
|-----------|---|--|--|
| By Hand | Easy, low maintenance, best control over where water goes | Time consuming | Try soaker hoses on timers or setting your nozzle over a plant's root zone and leaving it to soak, then come back later and move it to the next plant. |
| Sprinkler | Durable, easy to use. Low effort, waters everything at once. | Water in areas you may not need it, which could produce weeds and waste water | Segment your sprinklers so you have more control and can water different areas of your garden separately (shaded vs sunny, water-loving vs drought-tolerant, etc.) |
| Drip | Saves water compared to sprinklers. Even distribution of water. | Higher maintenance. May need to change emitter placement as plants grow. Needs to be left on for very long periods of time to give enough water. | To prevent root rot, don't place emitters near the crowns of the plants. Ensure that the whole root zone will be soaked, not just one side. Dig a hole to make sure the water has penetrated 14-20" to learn how long you need to leave it on. |

Native Garden Design Tips & Tricks



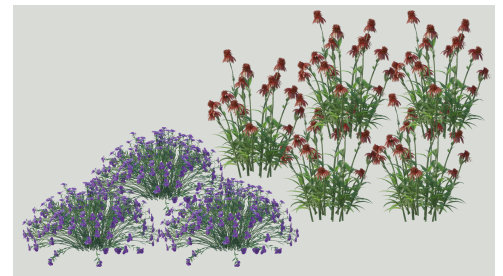
Develop a plant palette of local native species that “work together” or are “companion plants” in their natural habitat. Follow the placement guidelines below to arrange them in your yard. It’s important to put the right plant in the right place, so be sure to group plants with similar light and water requirements together in your yard where their needs can be met.



Single plants should be a focal point, like an oak tree or unique species with striking characteristics.



Odd numbers of plants are best, but you can use two plants to frame an entrance or create symmetry.



Groups of three and five plants arranged in a triangle or loose cluster creates a natural feel.



Leave space between plants that will become large and in-fill with small perennials, wildflowers, and grasses.



Create layers. Put tall plants at the back, especially along fences and walls. Then, medium ones in front of tall ones. Small plants belong in the front and along pathways.



Water-loving exotic plants and edible gardens should be irrigated separately from drought-tolerant natives. When planting natives near frequently irrigated areas, ensure they can tolerate the increased soil moisture.



Plant shade-loving species under trees to create an understory.

Learn more, download plant lists and sample layouts at ballonafriends.org/grow-native