



IRRIGATION MATTERS

This year it's been a hot dry summer with no decent rain since before Christmas. This has taken its toll on many of Melbourne's gardens with the decline in many trees, shrubs and groundcover, including gardens with automated irrigation systems. There are a few things to keep in mind when nursing a garden through hot dry weather:

LOOK



Look carefully at the garden. The Plants will tell you if they are water stressed. Wilting Leaves, brown leaves, grey/straw coloured lawns.

CHECK



Check the sprinkler system is working properly. Usually around Cup day as the weather starts to heat up. Run each sprinkler line and observe the coverage. Adjust the sprinkler system as required to get even coverage. There may be blocked nozzles to clear, a solenoid valve stuck open or closed, or a lawn sprinkler not rotating etc.

SET



Set the timer to come on every day over the summer period, preferably early in the morning. Early morning watering gets the plants well hydrated before the heat of the day and is the most efficient use of water avoiding loss to evaporation and wind drift.

Set the timer so that the garden is well watered before the household gets up, as the drop in water pressure can be frustrating when showering, washing dishes, clothes etc.

RAIN SWITCH



Make sure the sprinkler system has a rain switch, and that this is set appropriately and activates in the event of rain. This will avoid over watering during a wet spell and improves water efficiency.

GENERAL IRRIGATION RULES

Drip Irrigation

Garden beds that are being watered by drip irrigation should be on for **30 - 60 minutes** emitting 3 litres per hour from each drip point.

Sprays

Garden beds that are being watered by sprays should be on for **10 - 20 minutes**.

Lawns

Lawns should be watered for **10 - 20 minutes**.

ASK THE GARDENER



- Ask the gardener to apply wetting agents to help the soil around the plants absorb the water.
- Ask the gardener to apply organic mulch such as Surecrop to help retain moisture in the soil, to feed the plants and to discourage weeds.
- Ask the gardener to apply water crystals to help hold water around the plants.



If you are not confident about how to manage the garden during extreme weather, then contact your property manager who will organise expert help and advice from one of our experienced horticulturists.

