

# Preparing & Planting Your Garden



STEP 1

**PREP - Before digging, always make note of any existing sprinkler or utility lines to avoid. Prep the area by removing existing grass and weeds in the planting area.** If needed, amend the soil by mixing in a thin layer of either organic compost or rock, called squeegee, to the whole planting area. Keep in mind that many of the perennial plants are either native or non-native adapted, meaning that they are well suited for Colorado. Amending soil is a good idea to help improve soil drainage, but a little goes a long way.



STEP 2

**PLAN - Consider how you'll water your garden. If using drip irrigation, now's a good time to plan the layout of your drip lines. Then lay out your potted plants following the Plant by Number map.** Plan for the fully mature size of the plants. If the planting maps do not work for your desired space, take the mature height and spread listed on your Garden Info Sheet into account to rework the design.



STEP 3

**PLANT - Plant in the early morning or evening when temperatures are cool. Dig holes the same depth and 2x the diameter of the plant pot.** Hold the plant sideways and gently squeeze the pot to release. Carefully loosen the plant's root ball to encourage growth down and outward. If you have not already amended your soil in Step 1, add a handful of compost to the soil you've just removed and mix together. Place the plant in the hole, fill about 1/3 of the way with the soil mixture, and add water. Lastly, fill the remainder of the hole to the base of the soil mixture. **Always follow your local watering restrictions when applying these guidelines.**



STEP 4

**PROTECT - Now, it's time to mulch! Mulching is essential; it minimizes moisture evaporation and reduces weeds.** No need to place landscape fabric or plastic barrier down before mulching. You can either use a wood mulch or rock mulch like pea gravel or squeegee. Apply 2-3" of either type. If using wood mulch, keep a 6" area around the base of each plant free of mulch to avoid crown rot. Finally, give your plants a thorough watering. Great job on planting your garden!



tips

**Plant within two weeks of receiving your garden, weather permitting.** If snow or frost is forecasted, wait to plant. Store your plants in an area with some sunlight, and water at least every other day.

**Plant when perky!** If the soil in the pot is dry or the leaves look wilted, wait to plant. Instead, water thoroughly and place in the shade until the foliage perks back up.

**Don't judge a plant by just its foliage!** After some time in a pot, foliage may show signs of distress, which is normal. This is especially true for native plants, which thrive in our Colorado soil and not always in a pot! A good root mass is the best judge of "character". The roots are typically creamy white or tan, and the root tips, if visible, should be white.

**Looking for more info on any of these steps? Scan the QR code in this brochure to visit our new resources webpage that provides additional tips on waterwise landscaping.**

# Watering & Maintaining Your Garden

## Waterwise Perennial Plant Growth Expectations



**YEAR 1  
THEY SLEEP**

During the first year, proper care is vital to make your plants resilient. They are establishing their extensive root system and may not bloom this year.



**YEAR 2  
THEY CREEP**

During the second year, the plant roots are growing stronger and larger, and you will notice more foliage growth and blooms.



**YEAR 3 +  
THEY LEAP**

During the third year, the plants themselves are typically fully mature and producing beautiful blooms.

## Basic Watering Guidelines



**Much of Colorado is experiencing drought conditions. Follow your local water provider or municipality's watering restrictions for all outdoor water use. Check their website for current rules and updates. These guidelines do not override local watering restrictions.**



To establish a baseline watering schedule, follow the below suggestions for the average water needs of a low-water garden, **based on the use of 1/2 gallon per hour drip emitters.** These waterwise perennials can be watered either with a drip irrigation system, or by hand, taking care to deposit the water at the base of the plant. Regardless of the method you use, **the specific amount of water your plants require will depend on your unique site conditions** (soil type, wind conditions, sun exposure etc.).

FIRST 1-2 MONTHS	PEAK SEASON	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3 +
To aid establishment, plants initially require between 1/2 - 1 gallon of water per week. After this stage, extend the time between watering and gradually decrease amount of given.		30-45 mins. 1-2x per week	30-60 mins. 1x per week	30-60 mins. 1x every 2 weeks
	SHOULDER SEASONS	30-60 mins. 1x per week	30-60 mins. 1x every 2 weeks	30-60 mins. 1x every 2-4 weeks

Generally, peak season is June through mid-September. The shoulder seasons are April through May and mid-September through October. Every year is slightly different, so we recommend monitoring the weather and average temperatures rather than strictly adhering to a month-based schedule.

## Gardening Terms to Know



Refer to your enclosed Garden Info Sheet for seasonal maintenance tips for your garden.

**Soil Amendment:** Any material added to a soil to improve its physical properties for plant growth including aeration, drainage, and water retention. Differs from **mulch** in that soil amendments are mixed into the soil and mulch is added on top.

**Squeegee:** Landscape rock that is slightly smaller than pea gravel, typically 1/4" in diameter, used as both a soil amendment and mulch in low-water landscaping to improve soil drainage and water efficiency, without the need for organic material.

**Deadheading:** The removal of faded, spent or dead flowers and often the top few inches of growth beneath the blossom.

**Cutting Back:** Cutting down plant foliage or stems, to achieve a desired plant shape/size, to cause a second flush of growth, or to remove dead material from the previous season.

**Dividing:** The process of splitting up one mature plant into a few plants to maintain a smaller desired size or to plant new transplants elsewhere in the garden.

## Additional Watering Advice

1. **Timing is everything!** Always water between 6 p.m. and 10 a.m. for water efficiency.

2. **Closely monitor soil moisture and plant appearance.** Every yard is different and especially during drought conditions, the best advice is to pay attention to your plants to determine the appropriate amount of water to use.

Stick your finger into the soil (near base of the plant) about six inches deep. If it's dry and the plant looks wilted, then water. If the soil is moist and the plant looks perky, then no need to water right now! If the soil is moist and the plant looks wilted, then it is likely getting too much water and you should adjust your watering schedule.

3. **Mulch your garden!** Mulch will help retain soil moisture and reduce soil temperature fluctuations.

4. **Water deeply but infrequently to increase drought resilience.** Your Garden In A Box plants will benefit from deep, infrequent waterings and prefer to dry out between waterings.

5. **Consider your trees!** Trees provide crucial benefits for our residential landscapes. If you adjust your watering schedule to accommodate new plantings, ensure existing trees are still receiving enough water.

### FALL & WINTER WATERING GUIDELINES:

Turn off and drain sprinkler and drip irrigation systems for the winter season. **Water by hand only when the conditions below are met, following local watering restrictions.**

The high winds, low precipitation, low humidity, and large temperature swings of Colorado during late fall into early spring can wreak havoc on younger plants. Generally speaking, **plan to water about once or twice a month from November to April. Water when all of the following statements are true:**

1. Air and soil temps are above 40° F
2. The soil isn't frozen
3. There is no snow on the ground or in the immediate forecast

