

The Garden Corner

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Somebody is going to turn the spigot off pretty soon and we will all be thinking about watering. Here's a few things to consider while you do. Besides conserving a natural resource, knowing how to water saves you, your time and money.

As a general rule, all plants like to have about an inch of water per week. Those of you who have containers – especially those exposed to the sun – know watering three times a week might not be enough. Then there are those neat little flower beds running along both sides of the driveway. Talk about a “heat island”! You might have to keep them moist most of the time. Someone reading this is thinking: “What about natives?” While it is true most of them are drought-tolerant, they still require regular watering until they are established.

So how do you actually water? Before I tell you what I do and why, the experts say to install drip lines with a timer so you are not wasting water and you are thoroughly soaking the root zone. While initially expensive, their advice is absolutely true. I water with a wand – overhead. If at all possible, all the watering is done before noon so all the leaf surfaces have time to dry; thus helping to prevent mildew. Why overhead? Surprise! I like working in the garden!! And by hand watering there is a good chance I'll be able to enjoy looking at the plant or its flower(s). It's an opportunity to check the plant for any problems and while deep soaking the root zone, I have time to pull a few weeds in the process. The weeds – roots and all – come out easily in wet soil.

Now that the watering is done and not another weed is to be found, how do we keep the work we've done in fine form. Mulch. I use chipped wood. Its water retention is superior and as it decomposes, it adds organic material to the soil. For the shady beds we use leaf mulch. The point being: Mulch your beds with something to reduce the amount of watering and weeding you have to do.

That will do it for another month. David – thanks for the invite to your garden. You're making Warrensburg more beautiful. For your questions/comments write to: 370 NW 121 Rd., Warrensburg, MO 64093 or email: maandpak@embarqmail.com .