

WATERING GARDENS & CONTAINERS

Canberra is an attractive garden city with its well laid-out public gardens, particularly in and around the Parliamentary Triangle, and many well-maintained residential blocks. Indeed this approach is encouraged by the City's administrators through the plant issue of trees and shrubs to all new leaseholders. This leaflet describes how to best water your garden and pot plants.

In the garden

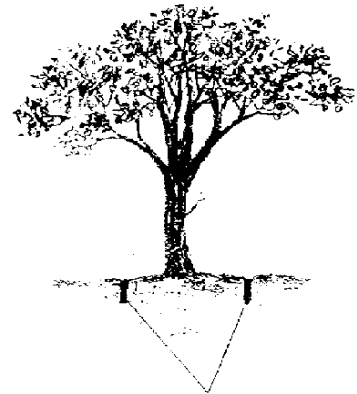
Annual flowers, bedding plants and some vegetables have shallow roots, and consequently require frequent watering. This is essential to maintain growth and to keep plants healthy and productive. Water when it is cool, and the air still. A thick layer of mulch will improve the structure and fertility of the soil, and its ability to hold moisture.

Shrubs prefer infrequent, thorough soakings to frequent light waterings. One deep watering is needed every 2-3 weeks, even in summer, less often in autumn and spring.

Remove weeds (which rob plants of water) and replace with a mulch. Applications should be no deeper than 100mm.

Don't water the leaves of trees and shrubs as this increases water loss through evaporation, the chance of fungal diseases developing, and can damage leaves on hot sunny days.

In times of drought, increase the amount of water available to water-dependent medium to large trees by digging a small trench or a number of carefully placed holes around each tree. Fill the holes with washed river sand (not pebbles or stones).



Trenches or holes with river sand

Tub plants

Tub plants can be an attractive feature in indoor and outdoor situations, but as they are in containers, we have to supply all their needs.

Outdoor plants should be planted in large tubs or pots as these dry out less quickly. Select a potting mix specially formulated for use in containers. The potting mix should be kept moist no matter what size the container is as this will prevent shrinkage from the sides, which enables water to run through the container without wetting the growing medium.

Smaller pots can be slowly dunked in a large container filled with water. The water enters through the bottom of the pot. Leave until water is seen on the surface of the growing medium. Do not let any water flow over the rim of the pot. If pots are watered this way, all the growing medium is moistened.

As a rough guide, tubs should be watered daily in summer and weekly in winter.

