



Nancy and Pierre Moitrier

Wise Watering

WATERING IS A CRITICAL YET UNDERRATED TASK

- Plants pull nutrients from the soil in the form of a solution. Water plays a critical role in nutrient transport, so a wilting plant is also a starving plant.
- If leaves lose their luster and appear chalky or dusty, root loss will occur next.
- Drought stress causes flower buds and fruits to abort and results in abnormally small leaves.
- Proper watering is as much about knowing when and how much to water as it is about understanding when NOT to water.
- Overwatering can be detrimental to plant health. Roots need air; if soils are continuously wet, water-filled pore spaces do not allow roots to breathe.

EACH SITE IS UNIQUE

- Soil type: soil particle size will define each soil's unique water-holding capacity. Sandy soils made of large particles will drain quickly. Clay soils made of tiny layered particles will hold water. Knowing which type you have should guide your watering strategy.
- Site and orientation: observe sun patterns and topographic idiosyncrasies. For example, a southwest-facing slope will dry before a northeast-facing slope.
- Indicator plants: plants that wilt before most others and signal that it is time to water.

ALLEVIATE WATER-RELATED CHALLENGES

- Match dry-loving plants to dry sites and moisture-loving plants to moist sites.
- Invest in quality hoses, sprinklers, watering wands, AND a rain gauge.
- Check plants daily for water stress during summer months.
- Water short-lifecycle plants like annuals and vegetables more frequently than perennials, shrubs, and trees.
- Apply sufficient water to thoroughly saturate the root mass while considering its size and density.
- Examine the soil for water penetration depth with a trowel or digging knife. It is best to water deeply and less frequently than shallowly and often. Deep watering (4"-6") encourages deep roots which makes for drought-tolerant plants.
- Pay close attention to new plantings for the first three years until they are fully established. Growing good roots takes time but will build solid foundations.
- Mulch and compost help to lower soil temperature and reduce water evaporation. 🌱

NANCY AND PIERRE MOITRIER operate *Designs for Greener Gardens*, a boutique gardening company that specializes in designing, creating, developing, and maintaining distinctive gardens of all styles. Pierre hails from France and brings the charm of the Old World to their garden creations. Nancy's 40 years of gardening experience combined with her design knowledge and innate artistic eye add a superior dimension to their garden projects. Follow *Designs for Greener Gardens* on Facebook.

