

Hints For Homeowners

Make Your Water Work Harder This Year

(NAPSA)—Many homeowners looking to maximize the efficiency of their outdoor water use turn to drip irrigation systems as a solution for keeping weeds, diseases, garden pests, scorching heat and high water bills at bay. Drip irrigation systems are easily set up by even a novice gardener and will deliver an immediate water savings as they place the exact amount of water slowly and evenly at the plant's roots—where it's needed most.

Here are some drip basics to help you save water:

1. Start by estimating the water needs of your plants. Knowledgeable and helpful staff at a garden center can assist you in determining just how much water your plants need to be healthy. Different plants will have different requirements depending on their variety and the conditions of your yard, such as sun exposure and soil type.

2. Drip systems can either be incorporated into an existing automatic sprinkler system or through a manual connection to an outdoor hose faucet. A manual hose-end connection can also be easily automated by using a battery-operated timer such as the Rain Bird Electronic Garden Hose Watering Timer.

3. For optimum performance, keep your water pressure under control with a pressure regulator. These simple devices keep your water pressure in the ideal range of within 20 to 50 psi. Drip systems are most efficient when operating at the correct pressure.

4. Include a filter in your system to prevent clogging. Drip uses smaller diameter openings than



Drip irrigation can be a great way to save water.

traditional sprinklers, so tiny bits of dirt and debris may clog your system if you don't use a filter. The good news is that filters are relatively inexpensive and easy to install.

A well-designed drip irrigation system will lose practically no water to runoff, deep percolation or evaporation. Steady, consistent watering can also lower plant stress, which leads to healthier and happier plants while lowering your water bill.

Rain Bird, a global leader in irrigation technology, offers an online step-by-step guide to drip irrigation in addition to interactive demos and a drip calculation program to help homeowners and contractors design and schedule drip irrigation systems correctly. You can check it out at www.rainbird.com.