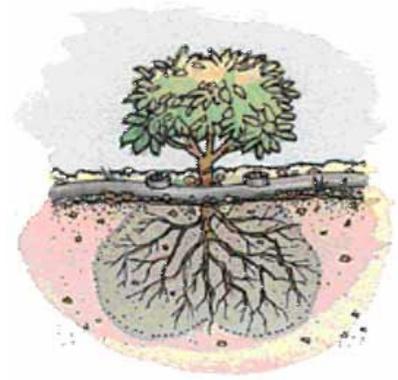


What is Drip Irrigation?



Drip irrigation is the slow and precise delivery of water to selected plants whether tree, shrub, vine or perennial. Applying the water slowly, allows it to seep into the soil and move laterally by capillary action beneath the soil's surface to the plant's root zone, creating an environment very conducive to better plant growth. Especially when used with an automatic timer, a drip system can be set to supply a steady, even moisture level at the root zone, thereby avoiding the wet/dry swings typical of overhead watering. It is the most efficient way to get water to the area of the plant where it can be best used....the roots. And, particularly when used with mulch, It reduces to almost nothing the amount of water lost to evaporation, a serious problem with other forms of irrigation, particularly sprinklers.

With conventional watering systems, water is lost through run off or evaporation, or blown away by wind, or wasted on non-growth areas. Using drip irrigation, water is absorbed slowly into the soil, directly into the root zone, and no water is wasted on non-growth areas. By placing water just at the root zone of the plant you can water much less and not as often. This method causes the water to be pushed deeper into the soil and helps to promote the plants' roots to grow downward and not just laterally, as they would with shallower watering.

In most cases, using drip irrigation means installing a permanent watering system using flexible polyethylene tubing and/or PVC pipe along with various types of emitters that apply specific amounts of water to each plant. Systems can include low-volume sprayers and various types of in-line emitters so they can be customized to individual plant needs. Systems can be constructed to cover anything from a small garden with a few plants to a few thousand acres, from flat spaces to steep areas usually considered unusable. Often these systems use automatic timers with multiple system controls so that you can irrigate different types of plants at different rates. There are now 'smart' controllers available that are linked to weather satellites and automatically adjust the amount of water based on the weather. These systems are designed to provide the most efficient use of a very precious commodity....water.

Why Should I Use Drip Irrigation?

- ✓ It saves water since only the areas directly around the plant's root are irrigated.
- ✓ The slow application rate prevents surface water build-up and reduces evaporation.
- ✓ Systems can be designed for all types of soil and all types of terrain.

- ✓ Plants are healthier because they are not stressed due to variations in soil moisture.
- ✓ There are fewer weeds because the areas between plants are not watered.
- ✓ Especially when used with an automatic timer, the use of a drip system results in extremely precise water control.
- ✓ Water application rates can be tailored to each plant by using different quantities of emitters and/or using emitters with different flow rates.
- ✓ The low flow rate allows for larger areas and more plants to be watered at the same time.
- ✓ Drip irrigation systems are far less expensive than underground sprinkler, bubbler or spray systems.
- ✓ Conversion from a sprinkler system to a drip system is easy to do.
- ✓ Drip systems are especially economical for use with native and drought tolerant landscapes in dry weather conditions.