



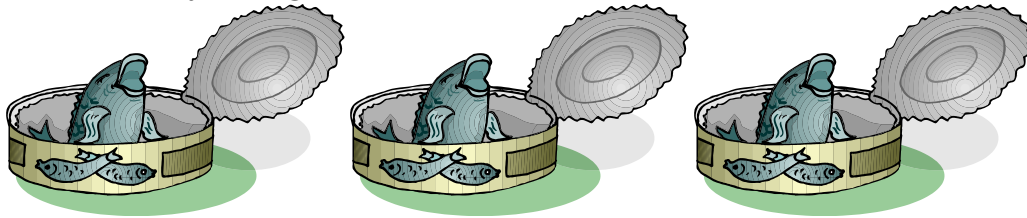
## The Guide To Proper Watering

*Watering test---By Lucy Harrell T.C.N.P.*

This test is for overhead systems only— not drip irrigation, soaker hoses, etc-for those systems you will need to water and then dig to check and see if you have actually gotten the soil wet down to 6 inches in the ground

For over head (traditional systems)

You will need—10-15 small cans-or like – [ cat food cans- tuna cans--anything ]



A bundle of landscape flags [optional if you want to write on them and mark dry or wet spots for the sprinkler guy]— they are wires with a little colored flag on the top most hardware stores have them in the safety dept.

Spread The cans out in a scattered pattern.

**FYI**—If you don't know how to run your controller-take the time to teach yourself-or ask for help-The directions and a station map should be on the door inside the box-if not- you can get the directions online from the company's website.

Turn your station to run as it is set now—because we may need to know what you have been doing—This is only important if you have had any known problems you are struggling with.

Check each can when the station turns off—set a timer that you will hear if you need to -so that you will know when the station that you are checking is about to be finished .Turn the system off while you check your cans.

If the cans don't have between 1/2"- 1" of water in them—that indicates that you need to water longer.

If Some cans are a lot fuller than others -that indicates that the system is not hitting all areas evenly—stick a flag in the areas that are too dry. Make a note as to how different the amount is in that area. You need to know this so you can relate it to the sprinkler guy.(example-1/4 inch here—while others got a full inch in the same amount of time )  
If the time period fell short in most cans then set the system to water another 5 minutes and see if that reaches our goal of 1/2-1 inch ( to the top of the black line ) continue to do this until you get enough in most of the cans –it won't hurt if a few get more than an inch.

If some of the cans are just barely getting water even though you have filled most of them –that’s fine for now –we will fix this so it doesn’t happen –you just need to be able to tell the sprinkler guy what your problems are so that he can come in and get right to work making the sprinkler design a good one that covers all areas evenly. ( I use the flags to write dry or too wet on to help me remember) You can save him (sprinkler guy) a lot of time and that saves you money—so this is well worth doing---This knowledge will keep you from having failures with your plants because we will be watering them well---but not over watering them. Keep remembering that you will only have to do this test one time until we get it just right (unless something gets blocked or broken later) –so put some time into it. Repeat this process with each station---Call to set up a time when your sprinkler installer can come out—let him know that we have done a test—If he is one of the men I use--tell him that you are one of my clients and he will know how we want him to fix things. If you need my list of professionals for names and numbers-just let me know. If he never heard of me then you will have explain to him what the goal is.

You will determine how often you need to water everything after you have determined how long you need to water to get that inch in the can.

If twice a week is the best you can do because of restrictions that's fine-but less often is best.

Important note—if you have been watering at frequent intervals—you cannot just jump down to fewer days (ex- don't go from every other day to every 5 days in one week) . Start by watering the period of time that you need to and add another day between the watering times every 2 weeks until you have reached your goal.

**One other thing that could happen** is that your water could start running off before the cans get even half full---this could be because the soil is so compacted and hard there and is way too dry for some reason—this will eventually be stopped with better soil achieved by my program and proper watering-- but at first --if it is a problem you will need to set the system to come on for a shorter period of time ( 10 min ) and then come right back on again for however long you need to water to get an inch. Don't count the 10 minute cycle.

If the runoff is caused by sprinkler heads that need to be changed then make a note for your sprinkler installer.



Once you have completed your test and taken care of the needed adjustments—**you will still need to monitor your landscape** to make sure that nothing changes. Things can happen—heads can get broken—valves can get stuck—plants can grow and block water off of other plants.



**Be sure that you are in control of your system**—When my customers ask me what setting to set their systems on—I tell them **OFF is the best setting**. I do recommend an automatic system if it is in the budget—and it is great to have it to set when you are away on a trip. **But know this**—even if you have a rain check system—all that means is-- a tiny sponge swells up when it gets wet and allows the system to come back on when it dries up—it does not

reset the system to come on at the proper interval after a good rain. So my advice is-- **Never Set It & Forget It.**



**Getting on a great watering schedule is one of the best things that you can do to ensure success in your gardens and especially in your lawns.**

Starting off right in the early Spring or late Fall makes this easy. Don't wait until it starts getting hot to get your yards ready for our Texas summers. Getting on a good schedule now will be especially important if you suddenly get put on mandatory restrictions .

Note-- The above watering guide is for established plants.

Watering newly planted plants correctly is very important. At first your newly planted plants need extra attention , extra water and extra monitoring from you.

Love & Luck, Lucy Harrell

Note- this is another great garden tool- Knowledge makes you successful.