

Does Your Landscape Have A Drinking Problem?

- Are your plant's leaves wilted or curled?
- Are the young shoots on your plants shriveled?
- Do you have algae or mushrooms growing in your lawn?
- Do your plant's leaves appear to be yellowing with green veins?
- Do your plant's leaves have a "torched" look to the edges (dry and brown)?
- Have you tried to install plants only to have them fail after a few weeks or months?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above, your landscape watering schedule may need to be adjusted.

As could be expected one of the most common reasons for plant failure here in the desert is incorrect watering. When spring arrives and temperature climb, the frequency of watering must be increased to keep up with plant's water needs. If you were watering say, once every two weeks in the spring, then increasing the frequency to a single watering once weekly during the summer should be adequate during the summer months. Too much water in the high temperatures and humidity of the monsoon season can cause root and stem rotting. Soils must be allowed to dry a bit in-between irrigations for the best plant health. This could save on your water bills as well.

During the cool weather of late autumn and winter over-watering is a common problem. As temperatures cool, many residents forget to reduce their watering. Plants that are irrigated at the same frequency they were in the summer are subject to root and stem rots.

But regardless of the season or frequency of application, it is critical to apply enough water when you do. Irrigate to wet the soil to the proper depth. Trees, should be watered long enough to wet the top two to three feet of soil. For shrubs, wet the soil down 18 inches or so. And for shallow-rooted turf, groundcovers, flowers and vegetables one foot deep wetting is sufficient.

To determine the depth of wetting, after irrigation, push a soil probe (metal rod) down into the soil. The probe will push down through wet soil but will stop when it hits dry soil. If water isn't getting down deep enough, increase the length of time you're watering.

Finally, when selecting plants remember to choose those that are desert adapted. They can tolerate wide swings in temperature, intense heat and sun, drought, low humidity, drying winds, alkaline soils, high salts, and pests. Plants not adapted to the desert struggle and often fail.

If you are experiencing high water consumption, contact the Water Conservation office to schedule a free home water audit. 480-503-6098

Be sure to visit the Town of Gilbert Water Conservation web pages for free landscape workshops, landscaping tips, water audits, frequently asked questions and more.

<http://www.ci.gilbert.az.us/water>