



## WaterSaver Newsletter

July 2013

### Does Your Landscape Have a Drinking Problem?

Plants may look a little stressed this time of year as they transition to higher temperatures. As you might expect one of the most common reasons for plant failure here in the desert is incorrect watering. If you were watering your established plants once every two weeks in the spring, then increasing the frequency to a single watering once or twice weekly should be adequate during the summer months. Watering too often in the high temperatures and humidity of the [monsoon season](#) can cause root and stem rotting. Soils must be allowed to dry just a bit in-between irrigations for the best plant health. This could reduce your water bills as well and that means money back in your pocket.

The key to success is to water deeply. 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. For shallow-rooted turf, groundcovers, flowers and vegetables 6 - 12 inch deep wetting is sufficient. The recommended run time for drip systems is a minimum of 2 hours and watering early in the morning or after sunset will reduce evaporation.

To determine how deep water is soaking in after irrigation, push a probe (metal rod) down into the soil. The probe will push easily 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.

Remember, July is [Smart Irrigation Month](#) a public awareness campaign to promote efficient water use. The Irrigation Association web site has loads of great information to help you water wisely.



The recommended schedule for watering is listed in the watering advice section below. If you have questions about watering your landscape, contact the Water Conservation Office at [conserve@chandleraz.gov](mailto:conserve@chandleraz.gov).

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### Upcoming Events

July

[Flashlight Tours at Desert Botanical Garden](#)

July

[Snowbowl Scenic Skyride - Flagstaff](#)

July

[Apple Annie's Orchard - Willcox, you pick produce](#)

July

[Ramsey Canyon - Hummingbird Capital](#)

July 1 - 7

[World's Oldest Rodeo - Prescott](#)

July 6

[Dragonfly Walk at Boyce Thompson Arboretum](#)

July 21

[Guided Bird Walk at Boyce Thompson Arboretum](#)

See complete schedule at [www.chandleraz.gov/water](http://www.chandleraz.gov/water)



## July

Our last significant rain was on April 8th, 90 days ago. Watering frequencies are the same as for June unless we get some rain. Monsoon rains are localized, so a rain gauge can be helpful. If you receive at least one-half inch of rain, skip an irrigation cycle. Use the 'off' or 'rain' setting on your controller to stop the watering cycle without disturbing your programs. These recommendations are for plants that are established in the landscape (in the ground about 2 years).

### Lawn watering:

- Summer grass (Bermuda) - once every 3 days
- Overseeded cool season grass (rye) - grass dies out

### If trees and shrubs are on the same valve:

- Desert Adapted - once every 14 days
- High Water Use - once every 7 days

### Tree watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 16 days
- High Water Use - once every 8 days

### Shrub watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 12 days
- High Water Use - once every 5 days

### Groundcover and vine watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 12 days
- High Water Use - once every 4 days

### Cacti and succulent watering - once every 21 days

### Annuals watering - once every 2-3 days

\*\*Reduce your landscape watering 30 to 50 percent by adjusting your irrigation each season.\*\* "[Landscape Watering by the Numbers: A Guide for the Arizona Desert](#)" will help you determine how much water to apply and how long to run your system. request a free copy at [www.chandlerzaz.gov/water](http://www.chandlerzaz.gov/water) or visit the interactive web site at <http://www.wateruseitwisely.com>.

Bonus tip: Use a coffee can or other container instead of a rain gauge as long as it has a flat bottom, vertical sides, and is deep enough so drops of water won't splash out. Stabilize the container and place in the open so trees, fences or sprinklers do not affect the amount of water that will accumulate. After a rain, simply use a ruler to measure.

Note: These recommendations are a general guideline only and may need to be modified for your specific site conditions.

## Ask A Garden Goddess



**My prickly pear is covered with white fuzzy growths. Is this a disease?**

Although it looks like a disease the white globs on your cactus are actually the clever disguise of an insect known as [cochineal scale](#).

The white cottony covering gives these native insects protection from predators. Hidden beneath a waxy coating the cochineal use their piercing mouthparts to sip fluid from the cells of the pads. When crushed they produce a deep red dye used for food, drinks and cosmetics known as [carmine](#). In the days of the Spanish conquistadors, this was the first permanent red dye discovered by Europeans and was valued more than gold.

To control, use a strong spray of water from a hoze nozzle or an insecticidal soap.

Email your question to [GardenGoddess@chandlerzaz.gov](mailto:GardenGoddess@chandlerzaz.gov)



## Water Wise Tips



Grandpa always said "You can't hit a home run unless you step up to the plate."

On slopes or compacted, heavy clay soils, water is generally applied faster than it can soak into the soil, resulting in water being wasted as it runs off-site. This summer you can 'hit a home run' with your landscape watering by preventing runoff.

## Plant of the Month

[Desert Willow](#)  
(*Chilopsis linearis*)

Desert willow is a fast-growing tree reaching up to 25 feet with spectacular trumpet-shaped flowers and glossy green, willow-like foliage. It is native to the southwestern United States and northern Mexico, and is commonly seen in dry washes from 1500 to 5000 feet. The fragrant orchid-like flowers



To avoid run-off on the grass or sloped areas of your landscape, you may need to program several shorter watering cycles in the same day, allowing about 30 minutes in-between for the water to soak in. This is called "[cycle and soak](#)" and is easily programmed into your irrigation timer.

This method of irrigation applies water slowly so the soil actually absorbs all that is applied. Instead of running each lawn sprinkler zone for 10 - 15 minutes each, run each zone only the amount of time that the soil can absorb the water (which means it's not running off onto the sidewalk or street).

Here's a typical cycle and soak schedule for lawns:

- Water for 3 different start times
- Water for 4 minutes each cycle
- Wait at least 30 minutes in between cycles
- Water 2 or 3 times per week in summer

For more information on how often and how much to water grass visit [Landscape Watering by the numbers](#).

appear in clusters varying in shades of pink from May to October and attract hummingbirds, finches and other nectar-feeding birds. The small papery seeds are a favorite of native birds like quail and dove.

[Desert willow](#) is thornless making it perfect for a mini-oasis, courtyard or planted on western and southern exposures, where shade is desired in summer. In winter, this tree is deciduous which reveals its interesting branch structure and allows radiant heat to warm homes or structures. It provides light shade for other plants such as Mexican honeysuckle and penstemons. In addition, it is prized by native Americans for its medicinal and ethnobotanical value .



For more landscape choices and design ideas to help you create a vibrant, attractive, colorful low water use landscape try

[Water Wise Landscaping in Chandler](#).

## Water Conservation E-News

This monthly newsletter will help you create stunning landscapes that use less water. Each issue is packed with personalized watering advice, notices about upcoming events, timely tips to maintain a healthy landscape, plus ways to reduce your water bill. Read past issues here - [WaterSaver newsletter](#).

[Sign-Up Now](#)

Sincerely,  
Water Conservation Staff

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Jack Sellers, Vice Mayor

Council Members  
Trinity Donovan  
Nora Ellen  
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Rick Heumann  
Jeff Weninger



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Questions or comments? We want to hear from you! Contact us at [conserve@chandleraz.gov](mailto:conserve@chandleraz.gov)

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