



Types of irrigation systems

There are many different ways to water your lawn, borders, flowers and vegetables. All have their pros and cons. Most commonly used are hoses and sprinklers, but lesser known systems are available that provide more targeted and efficient water application.

💧 Hoses

Watering with a hose isn't very efficient – both from a watering and time perspective. Hoses are best used when watering individual, large plants in containers and pots such as tomatoes, herbs and strawberries. In these situations, using a hose enables you to apply exactly the right amount of water within a small area. If you are using a hose to water a vegetable garden, it's best to leave the hose running with only a trickle of water coming out near each plant until the water has soaked down to at least six inches deep.

💧 Sprinklers

Sprinklers make short work of watering large lawns and gardens, but can be indiscriminate in their application if not carefully designed. They're good on light, sandy soils that absorb water quickly (providing you don't apply more water than the soil can hold) but can be a problem on heavier clay soils that absorb water more slowly. If your garden is on a slope, the water may run off. Water direction can also change in strong winds and portable sprinklers may fall over or move in sudden gusts of wind. Pop up sprinklers are more targeted and work well on lawns. They're great for watering large areas when you're pressed for time, but bear in mind constantly wetting the foliage of vegetable plants can lead to disease. When you use a sprinkler, try to water in the morning so the foliage can dry before evening and to reduce water losses from evaporation.

💧 Soaker hose irrigation

A soaker hose is a rubber hose that has been perforated with tiny holes so it leaks water. A soaker hose system is where lines of hoses lie between rows of plants or are curved around them. Water soaks out of the hose onto the soil leaving the foliage dry and reducing evaporation. Using a soaker hose system is cheaper and easier than drip irrigation because it involves less set-up and has no nozzles.

💧 Drip and micro-sprinkler irrigation

Drip irrigation releases water slowly through emitters in flexible plastic pipes. Micro-sprinklers also release water slowly through small sprinklers inserted into flexible plastics pipes. There are various drip and micro-sprinkler irrigation systems available for home gardeners. Some have a single pipe with flexible lines running off it, others are a series of pipes which are connected to a water supply, filter and often a pressure regulator, along rows of plants, so the water flows directly onto the roots of your vegetables. Drip and micro-sprinkler irrigation are the most efficient water to water vegetables because water is getting right to the root zone and very little is wasted. They are a more expensive system than other methods but can work well where water restrictions mean targeting of water use is critical.



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