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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Watering Your Garden

By Richard Miller, WSU Ferry County Master Gardener

June was a rainy month; now it is time to think about the hot dry weather when it comes to our gardens. How should you water, how much should you water, and when should you water are all aspects that you should think about for a strong, healthy garden. Your garden needs a specific amount of water depending on your soil type and where you planted.

Let's look at different soil types first to help determine the amount of water you may need:

- Clay - If your garden soil is mostly clay you will notice that the water just runs off instead of soaking in. You will need to add soil amendments, such as compost or other organic amendments like peat.
- Sandy – If your garden soil is a sandy or mostly sand you will notice that water does not run off; it soaks in immediately and quickly drains out. With this type of soil you will need to add amendments like peat moss, compost, manures, or organic matter.
- Topsoil- Is a dense (thick and heavy) soil. It needs amendments to help the water move through it to feed your plants. Some types of amendments you can use are perlite or vermiculite, peat moss, humus, or composted cow manure.

Where you live and where you choose to plant your garden also will have an effect on how much you should water. My garden has both shade and open areas. My wife likes to plant her tomatoes and peppers against a Southern wall for the extra heat. This means that her little garden will need more water, because heat will dry out the soil faster.

The best form for watering is using a drip system. If that is not possible during this dry weather, watering in the morning and in the evening will be best for your garden. Gardens need a deep soaking, but be careful that you do not over-saturate. Proper watering is necessary for healthy plants. Excess watering can produce foliage at the expense of fruits, vegetables and flowers. Excess shallow watering encourages shallow root systems and weak plants.

Just remember to pay attention to your plant's health and soil type. I hope everyone gets a great crop from their garden this year. Happy Gardening!

Master Gardeners is a WSU Extension program, which is available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.