

PURISSIMA PIPELINE

Drip Irrigation

As promised, this newsletter is dedicated to drip irrigation. Instead of re-inventing the wheel, this segment is from h2ouse.org and has been provided for your reading enjoyment:

Drip irrigation (sometimes called micro or low flow irrigation) has undergone many improvements in recent years and is now widely accessible to homeowners. If you are still irrigating shrubs and planting beds with overhead spray heads, it is time to convert to drip.

Drip irrigation applies water to the root zone of the plant at low pressure and low volume. Water is delivered efficiently—just where plants need it. Because it is applied slowly on or near the ground, no water should be lost to runoff or evaporation. The amount delivered can be controlled by varying the length of time the system runs or by the type of emitters.

Drip Tips

1. Drip irrigation can take the form of emitters, microsprays, or soaker hoses.
2. Drip is the preferred method of irrigating trees, shrubs, and vegetable gardens, but it is generally not recommended for continuously rooting ground covers.
3. Subsurface drip can be used to irrigate lawn areas. Emitter lines are buried 4 to 8 inches below the lawn or soil surface and are usually spaced 12 to 18 inches apart. Water from the emitter line spreads slowly through the soil to irrigate the lawn or plants.
4. Overhead irrigation systems can be converted to drip with retrofit heads.
5. Drip systems can be connected to a hose end and manually operated, or be permanently connected to your main water source and operated by an automatic controller.
6. Plan enough capacity (emitters) for when your landscape matures. Use the product's emitter selection chart to determine the flow rate and number of emitters per plant.
7. Polyethylene ("poly") tubing on the surface in areas of heavy foot traffic or children's play areas can easily be broken, disconnected, or vandalized.
8. Dogs, raccoons, gophers, and other animals can chew tubing and emitters. If this is a problem, use rigid pipe (polyvinylchloride or PVC) and protection for emitters.
9. Drip irrigation needs to be regularly maintained to check for leaks and clogged heads. Keep your system as simple as possible to lower maintenance. Half-inch diameter drip line with the emitters built into the line is highly recommended to minimize maintenance.

Drip irrigation is easy to install, inexpensive compared to overhead sprinkler systems, and can reduce disease problems associated with high levels of moisture on some plants. Most home improvement stores carry some drip kits, but go to an irrigation supply store for advice and a full line of drip irrigation components. Additional design and installation information for drip irrigation can be found at www.irrigationtutorials.com.

As always, if you would like more information or have questions, please contact Alexis Shields, Water Conservation Specialist, at ashields@purissimawater.org or call the office at (650) 948-1217.