



Drip Irrigation for Containers

The basics

- Attach a two way manifold (or larger) to your outside faucet
- Attach an automatic timer to one of the manifold outlets.
- Optional: attach a pressure relief valve to the timer outlet.
- Run a length of solid hose (1/2 or 1/4 inch diameter) from the timer (or pressure relief valve) to the container.
- Using a connector(s) to transition from solid tubing to 1/4" soaker hoses in the pots. Either add one continuous blind end coil to weave between plants or several concentric circles, the former being easier.
- Use bent wires to hold porous hose in place on soil surface.
- Add a valve on every container line for individual flow adjustment.

Typical settings

- 10 minutes per day at a slow/moderate drip rate in hot weather
- 10 minutes every other day in cooler-warm weather
- In sustained temperatures of 90+' you may need an extra cycle/day.
- Morning or evening is fine since the foliage is not being watered.
- As with any adjustment to watering, observation the first week is key. Check to see if any particular plant seems to be wilting and that the soil is evenly moist. Adjust hose position and/or valve setting as needed.

Balancing the system

This needs to be done at the start of every season.

- Fully open all valves and switch on the water.
- Adjust each pot valve individually until you have the same amount of water coming out of each hose. Without this step the first pot will get more water than the last. You are aiming for a steady drip like the ticking of a clock.

Winter care

- Disconnect the timer and bring inside. Leave hoses in place.

Landscape irrigation considerations

- I prefer not to link a typical automatic landscape watering system with this type of container irrigation. Pots need a different watering regime to the landscape.
- The exception to above is if you have your landscape being watered with a soaker hose system. You can pierce the larger landscape hose (usually 5/8") and attach the container 1/4" hose. That way when the soaker hose is running in the garden it will also water those pots which are included on the circuit. Be sure to add valves to all container lines. Monitor landscape plants and containers carefully.
- Most landscape irrigation specialists use perforated (not porous) hoses in containers, with or without emitters and rarely use valves. These specialists do what they believe is correct but sadly it is at best inadequate and at worst will allow plants to die either from rot or drought.

Final notes

- If you have a lot of pots in different areas consider having them set on consecutive timers to maintain good water pressure.
- Attach solid tubing to house walls using specially made staples. This can be done discreetly by following the trim or siding
- To hold solid tubes in place on concrete (such as within the expansion joints) we have used various products including museum putty and mastic.
- I do not cover porous hose with mulch. It is quickly hidden by the plants.
- When you replant each season, take the porous hose out of the pot, replant and then feed the hose back to accommodate the new plant locations. You will probably have to adjust the tubing length.
- Porous hoses usually last 2+ years. When the water does not drip through evenly it is time to replace them. The solid tubes last indefinitely.
- I prefer not to run hoses through container drainage holes as it could restrict drainage and/or maintenance.

Useful links

Rain drip <http://raindrip.com/>