



## Countdown to Establishing New Plants: 3-2-1

By Mark Peterson, Garden Style San Antonio

All new plants require mindful watering to get them off to a good start. Once plants are properly established, they respond with vigor and need surprisingly little water, even during times of drought.

So how do you properly water to establish plants? It's as easy as 1-2-3 — or rather 3-2-1.

The basic rule for all plants, including perennials and shrubs, is to start with frequent but light watering and gradually transition to infrequent, deeper watering.

Here's how our 3-2-1 rule works over a six-week period:

- **First three weeks** — Water three times a week.
- **Next two weeks** — Twice-a-week watering.
- **Final week** — Water just once.

When you water, make sure you're concentrating only on the root ball. Watering outside the root ball doesn't help the plant, and it wastes water. This is why hand watering is the best method.

Water just enough to soak the root ball – about 16 ounces of water per 1 gallon size plant. For a 2-gallon plant, that's 32 ounces of water. If you're using a hose equipped with a watering wand, then count roughly five seconds to equal 16 ounces.

Once you've finished the 3-2-1 regimen, water no more than twice a month. You pick the days — maybe the second and fourth Saturdays. (You get the idea.) And monthly rainfall means you won't have to water at all!



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