

FACT SHEET

Handwatering & Other Low-Volume Irrigation Technology

Year-Round Water Conservation Measures

Handwatering refers to the practice of watering plants with a watering can, pail, or hose. Any such hose must be held and operated by a person applying the water, and it must be fitted with a self-canceling trigger-type nozzle.

Low-Volume Irrigation refers to the use of devices specifically designed to both strictly limit the volume of water being applied and efficiently deliver that water within the root zone of the plant. Besides handwatering, common examples of low-volume irrigation include microirrigation (such as microjets and drip tubes) and soaker hoses (the kind that dribble, not spray, water).

The use of “smart” irrigation system controllers does not constitute low volume irrigation as defined by Chapter 40D-22, Florida Administrative Code. Use of these controllers, when combined with multiple soil moisture sensors and as part of a program run by a monitoring entity as specified Chapter 373.62(7), Florida Statutes, might qualify for a “494 Variance” (see separate fact sheet) instead of the low-volume irrigation exemption.

ALLOWANCES FOR HANDWATERING AND OTHER LOW-VOLUME IRRIGATION:

- There is an automatic exemption from the standard twice-per-week lawn watering schedule when handwatering or other low-volume technology is used to irrigate trees, shrubs, potted plants, flower beds and other NON-LAWN areas.
- The same exemption applies to vegetable gardens and other dedicated agricultural production areas.
- Irrigation using handwatering or other low-volume technology can be done on any day and at any time. To further minimize evaporative loss, please consider using it only during the normally allowable irrigation times (before 10:00 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m.).
- Such irrigation is still limited to the amount and frequency needed. Many established trees and shrubs do not need regular irrigation.

General Information

Stricter local ordinances may apply, so be sure to also check with your local water utility. If you have any questions about how these year-round water conservation measures apply to your situation, please e-mail Water.Restrictions@WaterMatters.org any time or call 1-800-848-0499 during normal business hours.

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