For News Release

Prepared by: Lee Dudley

CEA-Agriculture & Natural Resources

Texas AgriLife Extension Service

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**Home Gardening, Watering is Everything!**

Water, what a wonderful element it is, in its simplest form, we have the combination of two hydrogen and one oxygen atom found in nature as gas coming together to create a whole new compound that in its natural state is found as a liquid but oh what a liquid. Harvard University notes that “water makes up 60-75% of human body weight. A loss of just 4% of total body water leads to dehydration, and a [loss of 15%](http://rehydrate.org/dehydration/) can be fatal”. Its versatility and adaptability help perform important chemical reactions. Water is so important to us humans that we could live thirty days without food but only three days without water.

Likewise, water is just as important for our home gardens. For many, gardening is a form of relaxation, so it is not unusual for many gardens to be watered two, three or more times a week. However, many gardening problems, such as poor yield, poor quality, poor fertility, bitter fruit, sun scald, disease problems and a dozen other things, can be related to poor or improper watering techniques. Light, frequent watering causes a concentration of roots in the top inch or two of the soil. These undeveloped root systems do not pose any serious problem early in the season when the plants are relatively young and sufficient moisture is available. But, as the season progresses and moisture becomes scarce, and temperatures rise the limited root system needs more frequent watering. Consequently, you may need to water several times a week just to keep the plants from wilting severely.

We can determine when it’s the right time to water our gardens by examining the soil, not the plants. If the soil surface appears dry, scratch the surface to a depth of about an inch, determining if moisture is present. If the soil appears relatively dry, watering is necessary. If sufficient moisture is available at an inch depth from the surface, wait a couple of days before watering. Another consideration is the type of soil in your garden. Obviously, light sandy soils drain quickly requiring more frequent watering as compared to heavy soils which hold water. Therefore, check sandy soils more often than heavy clay soils. How much water should you apply? Soak garden soil to a depth of at least 6 inches, always remember to check before turning on the faucet. After doing this several times, you learn by experience when adequate water has been applied. An inch or two of water applied once a week usually is sufficient for most vegetable gardens in Texas, when temperatures are not in the extremes but as we continue to flirt with the 100-degree mark, it is critical to increase our watering efforts due mainly to the amount of moisture we lose from evaporation. For more information about this or other topics, fill free to contact your Panola County AgriLife Extension Office at (903)693-0300 Ext. 161

**UPCOMING EVENTS AND DATES:**

**July 13………………. Panola 4-H Cooking night at the Panola Expo 5:30 – 7 pm**

**July 14 ………………. Panola Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting Noon at Panola Expo**

**July 31 ………………. Panola 4-H ALPA Meeting (Moved from August 7th due to open house at area schools)**

**August 2 ……………. Panola County Beef and Forage Committee Meeting Noon, Location TBD**

**August 11 …………… Panola Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting Noon**

**August 15 …………… Panola County Horticulture in Evening 5:30 at Sammy Brown Library**

**August 26 …………… Panola County 4-H Awards Banquet**