

Quenching Your Garden's Thirst

by Rita Pelczar



RainSelect Wand with ColorStorm Premium Rubber Hose

SUMMER HEAT can dry out any garden. When there isn't enough rain to satisfy your plants' needs, you have to bring the water to them. As with any garden task, delivering water to parched plants is easier and more efficient when you have the right tools.

GARDEN HOSES AND ACCESSORIES

Garden hoses differ in length, width (diameter), and construction. Most garden hoses range from 25 to 100 feet in length. The longer the hose, the heavier it is, so select a length appropriate for your yard. Do this by measuring the distance from your spigot to the furthest point of your garden that typically needs watering. The diameter of the hose, typically 3/4, 5/8, or 1/2 inch, determines water flow and pressure; a 5/8-inch-diameter hose meets most gardening needs.

The **ColorStorm Premium Rubber Hose** from Dramm (www.rainwand.com) has tight-sealing couplings constructed of crush-proof, nickel-plated brass and is available in several bright colors designed to be noticed. The hose itself is made of a flexible reinforced rubber that is designed in a hexagonal shape, which makes for an easy grip. It's a bit heavy, but very durable. Available in 25- and 50-foot lengths.

The **Flexogen® Super Duty Hose** from Gilmour (www.gilmour.com) comes with a lifetime warranty. Its eight-layer



Flexogen Super Duty Hose

construction maximizes both durability and kink resistance. I have found that its crush-resistant brass couplings and stainless steel spring "sleeve" at the spigot end—which prevents kinking at the spigot—provide a leak-free connection.

My thornless blackberries have appreciated the **Flat Soaker Hose**, also from Gilmour. Made of recycled vinyl, it's flexible and efficient, delivering water directly to the root zone. You can lay it out in a straight line or snake it through a bed. It can be used aboveground or buried and comes in lengths of 25, 50, or 75 feet.

So that I don't forget to turn off the soaker hose, I use Gilmour's **Mechanical Water Timer** to set the amount of time—between one and 120 minutes—that it runs. This simple device, which works



Mechanical Water Timer

for sprinklers and other irrigation tools, requires no batteries—it simply shuts the water off when the time you set is up.

The **Hose Bib Extender**, a nifty item available from Planet Natural (www.planetnatural.com), provides another spigot in my yard. This faucet extender is a hose connector featuring a brass spigot on a 31-inch steel stake. Use the step bar to push the stake into the ground. Then connect one end of a hose to a faucet and the other end to the spigot on the stake. Presto! Now you have a water source in another part of your yard without having to drag a hose that distance every time you water. Of course, you need to dedicate a hose to the setup, but I find it's worth the convenience.

Hand watering is a great way to observe your plants up close. Attached to the business end of a hose, Dramm's **Rain-Select Wands** offer a variety of spray patterns and a flow control switch that makes it easy to turn the water on and off using just your thumb. I usually use the "shower" or "flood" patterns for watering, but if I observe aphids on a plant, I can select "jet" for a hard spray that knocks them off. The wands are available in 16- and 30-inch lengths and come in fun, eye-catching colors.



needed. The ollas are available in various vaselike shapes that range from seven to 12 inches tall and hold 3/4 quart to 1 1/2 gallons of water.



Ollas

For watering houseplants, or to fill the ollas, the **Copper Indoor Watering Can** from Gardener's Supply Company (www.gardeners.com) holds a generous three quarts of water, has a well-balanced handle, and a slender curved spout that directs

the flow exactly where you want it. Made of steel with a hammered copperplated finish, this can is attractive enough to leave on display when it's not in use.



Copper Indoor Watering Can

Just like you, your plants lose moisture when the sun shines and the temperatures rise. Keeping them hydrated is a cinch with these tools, giving you time to relax and enjoy a tall, cool drink yourself.

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Hose Bib Extender

WATERING CONTAINERS OUTDOORS AND IN Arizona Pottery (www.arizonapottery.com) offers handmade unglazed terracotta clay reservoirs called **ollas** (pronounced "oy-yahs") that provide subsurface irrigation to container-grown plants. Bury ollas in your container at planting time, leaving the top exposed just above the surface so it can be filled with water. As the soil dries, water seeps through the porous clay into the root zone where it's