

Selecting the Most Suitable Watering Systems

<i>Type of Irrigation System</i>	<i>Flexibility</i>	<i>Initial Investment</i>	<i>Setup and Watering Labor</i>	<i>Maintenance & Reliability</i>	<i>Evenness of Irrigation</i>	<i>Suitable Crops</i>
Hand Watering	+	+	-	+	-	Small batches most Crops
Overhead						
Sprinkler	+	+	o	o	-	Most Pots & Flats. Avoid with crops that need dry foliage
Boom	+	o	+	o	o	
Surface Systems						
Drip/Spaghetti	-	o	o	-	o	Large Pots, Baskets
In-line Emitters	-	o	o	-	o	
Spray Emitters	-	o	o	-	o	Some Pots and Flats
Sub-Irrigation						
Capillary Mat	+	o	+	o	o	Pots of any size
Troughs/Gutters	-	-	+	o	o	Most Pots
Ebb&Flood Benches	+	-	+	o	+	Most Pots and Flats/ Cell packs. Limitations with some Bedding plants
Flood Floors	+	-	+	+	+	

KEY: (+) Good (o) Moderate (-) Poor

Questions to ask when you make irrigation choices

1. Are the crops better suited for overhead/surface or sub-irrigation?
2. How much initial investment for long-term labor savings and quality improvement is possible?
3. How well does the new irrigation system complement existing and future growing systems?
4. Which systems will best minimize risks of foliar and root diseases?
5. What types of crop handling automation are in place or planned?
6. How important is flexibility with crops and growing containers
7. Few large or many small crop batches with different irrigation needs?

