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Answer::

Frequent watering isn't necessarily good for plants, since it encourages shallow roots that dry out quickly. For best results, get in the habit of watering long enough for the soil several inches down to get wet, rather than just the top inch or so. If you're not sure whether you've watered long enough, dig a small hole to check how much moisture has percolated down into the soil. Another simple way to determine how much water your sprinkling has delivered is to place empty cans (tuna or cat-food cans are ideal for this) in the area you are watering. When you think the sprinklers have delivered enough water, check the cans to see how much really fell on the ground. (Applying 1"/2.5 cm of water will wet the soil several inches/cm deep.) You'll probably have to run the sprinklers for considerably longer than you would expect. Reprinted from The Veggie Gardener's Answer Book Copyright 2008 by Barbara W. Ellis, with permission from Storey Publishing. Creative Commons photo credit: Stephen Rees

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