Watering Foundation: Protecting Foundations

- Place soaker hoses or drip irrigation lines 18 to 24 inches from the foundation. The hose or drip line should not be placed against the foundation.
- Run the hose or drips when evaporation will be minimal, such as before dawn or after sunset. Run the hose or drips at a rate that allows the water to trickle into the soil, not pool or run off.
- To determine the right schedule for your situation, water for about 30 minutes two or three days a week then try this rule-of-thumb test.
- Dig a small hole 16 to 24 inches deep on each elevation of your house near the foundation. Get a handful of dirt from the bottom of the hole. Roll some of the dirt into a 2-inch diameter ball. If the dirt holds together in the ball shape, you've probably got the right amount of moisture. If it doesn't hold together, you need to water longer or more often on that elevation of your house. After a week or so of adjusted watering, try the dirt-ball test again to see if you get better results. Repeat these steps until you get consistently good results.
- As the seasons change, adjust your schedule based on periodic dirt-ball tests.
- To slow evaporation, put an 18- to 24- inch-wide band of mulch 2 to 4 inches deep along the foundation where you have bare dirt.