**ASK FLORA – Drip Irrigation**

**Sage & Snow Garden Club**

**January 2019**

Flora is back after a little hiatus. I have been thinking about my garden a lot lately and here are some questions and answers on watering with a pump and drip irrigation lines. Of course if you use city water or well water, you might not need a pump.

Dear Flora,

What are some of the things to consider when sizing your irrigation pump?

Signed, Savvy Sally

Dear Savvy,

• The total head lift, this is the suction head height plus the discharge head height.

• How many sprinkler heads you will have, along with their GPM and PSI requirements.

• Distance to your farthest sprinkler.

• And power requirements, or if no electricity is available a gas-powered pump.

Dear Flora,

Where is a good place to locate irrigation pump?

Signed, G.P. Smith

Dear G.P.,

Try to locate irrigation pump as close to water source as possible, as it is easier for a pump to push water out then to pull water upward. Water sources could include a well, storage tank or ditch.

Dear Flora,

What are some of the sizes of piping commonly used for irrigating gardens?

Signed, Carrie Ositee

Dear Carrie,

If you start with a 2” suction line, then use a 1 ½” rigid PVC pipe for header piping, then ¾” tubing off header, next ½”, all the way down to ¼” tubing going to plants that need less water.

Dear Flora,

I have water from an irrigation ditch that I could use for watering my garden; how can I filter the water to prevent the lines and sprinkler heads from clogging?

Signed, Sedie Ment

Dear Sedie,

Here’s an idea used by a local gardener: drill holes about half-way up a lick tub to allow water to enter the tub from the water source at a high enough level to avoid most sand and silt, then submerge the tub in the water source adjacent to the pump. Install a 3- inch filter on the discharge side to further block the sand and silt from entering the system. In spite of these two measures, he still has to clean the main discharge filter about every three days and the filters on the sprinkler heads have to be cleaned about every use. Another option is to pump water into a large cistern/tank and allow the sediment to settle to bottom (where you would have a cleanout) before drawing water from this.

Dear Flora,

Can I fertilize my garden utilizing my drip irrigation system?

Signed, Root Strong

Dear Root,

Yes and it is easy. Add a fertilizer injector into the discharge side of your system to feed plants nutrients in a liquid form.

Dear Flora,

I have considered using drip irrigation, but my garden plot is really big and I do not want to take up all the lines before winter. Can I leave all the lines and attachments out during the winter?

Signed, Bertha Big Garden

Dear Bertha,

Yes. Some local gardeners leave their lines out and even the pumps. The key is to drain all as much as possible and put recreational vehicle antifreeze in the discharge side of the pump. Make positively sure the pump is totally drained.

Dear Flora,

What are some of the online websites for irrigation equipment?

Signed, Web Surfer

Dear Web,

A quality irrigation pump is essential to your system. Time spent on research and planning to calculate watering needs is critical to get the watering results you want. Of course, check with local vendors, but you can often get personal help (and materials) at the following sites: [www.dripdepot.com](http://www.dripdepot.com), [www.dripworks.com](http://www.dripworks.com), and [www.waterpumpsdirect.com](http://www.waterpumpsdirect.com).

Dear Flora,

Where can I obtain more information about gardening in Sublette County?

Signed, Inquis Itive

Dear Inquis,

The Sage and Snow Garden Club usually meets the third Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be 5pm, Febuary 19th at the Sublette County Weed and Pest Office at 12 S Bench Road, south of Pinedale. Everyone is welcome. The website [www.sageandsnow.org](http://www.sageandsnow.org) also has all Ask Flora articles and yearly events, such as the August Garden Tours!