



Australian Government

Australian National Botanic Gardens

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GARDENS INSTALL NEW WATER SAVING TECHNOLOGY

Best practice water saving technology is hitting the ground at the Australian National Botanic Gardens, to help the Gardens further reduce water use.

In a time of increasing water costs and a greater need to save water, the Gardens is installing soil moisture sensors to be used in conjunction with the computer-controlled irrigation system that was commissioned in 2006.

The Gardens' Director, Anne Duncan, said the new technology will help make sure that each area is watered at just the right level and just the right time to meet plant needs.

"These sensors will help us understand how quickly the soil is getting wet when we water, and how deep the moisture goes," she said.

"We'll be using this data to adjust our watering regimes so we make the most of every drop."

The first two batches of soil moisture sensors will be up and running by the end of the week. They are part of the Gardens' ongoing strategy to improve water management, and come ahead of a major water infrastructure upgrade planned over the next year and a half.

"The first major stage of the infrastructure upgrade will start later this year - separating the drinking water supply in the buildings from the irrigation system," Anne said.

"We'll be laying in an extra set of water pipes, so we will have two entirely separate water systems – one for the clean drinking water for visitors and staff, and one for non-potable irrigation water," Anne said.

"This will cause some unavoidable disruption for visitors later in the year, but I am sure that the visitors will be happy with the results."

The Gardens expects to call for tenders for this first stage of the upgrade within the next month. Other water-saving initiatives already in place include recycling water in the pond systems and nursery, minimising watering on lawns, and collecting water from buildings for the Growing Friends nursery.

Anne Duncan, Director of the Australian National Botanic Gardens, is available for interview.

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