Watering

When? Water early in the morning, especially during the summer, to avoid losing a lot of water to evaporation. This also ensures plants are dry before it gets cold and dark, when fungal diseases can spread easily.

Where? Focus on the root zone rather than overhead watering on foliage.

How often? In general, younger plants will need more frequent watering because their root systems do not reach very far below the soil line. This is particularly relevant for seedlings in trays which have access to a very small amount of soil. More mature plants with larger root systems can go longer in between waterings and should be watered deeper (more water dispensed). It is better to water more deeply and less often to encourage plants to grow strong and deep roots.

How much? Use a finger to feel if the soil is moist a few inches down (or however deep the roots of the plant may be). You want to water the entire root zone of the plant. Tomatoes have a long taproot and appreciate a deep watering less frequently, whereas lettuce heads have fibrous roots that benefit from more frequent shallow watering. Many plants root systems mirror their growth above the soil.

Signs of overwatering: Yellowing of leaves, yellow leaves will eventually fall off. Curled or wilted leaves.

Signs of underwatering: Leaves lose sheen, eventually wilt, and become crunchy and dry.