(A company called Netafim now has a new type of in-line emitter tubing—Techline® HCVXR Landscape Dripline, with copper oxide built into every emitter. The copper prevents root intrusion, so it's a great tubing to use for sub-surface installations. This is assuming you don't have a gopher problem—they love to nosh on drip tubing.)

Daily Versus Infrequent Watering

Perhaps the biggest debate about irrigation is how often to water. The choices range from daily, to weekly, to monthly, even.

For my money, daily irrigation is the best and promotes the greatest growth and yields. This is considered radical by many gardeners. Once the soil is at a proper moisture level (NOT anywhere near wet) a daily irrigation with very tiny amounts of water, especially in arid or summer-dry climates keeps "the tank topped off." Where there are periodic rains, the system would only be turned on once the soil has returned to an ideal soil moisture level. (Take a fistfull of soil, throw it six or so inches high. If it crumbles when it hits your fist, it's about the correct amount of moisture.) This means that, in dry weather, the drip system is turned on every day for a very short time.

When I was landscaping I often got great results by using these eight simple steps :

1. Prep the soil and rake it out to the contours you desire.
2. Lay out the in-line drip system with emitters every 12 inches, and stake it in place.
3. Water the entire landscape with an overhead oscillating sprinkler.
4. Return to plant after the soil becomes slightly moist, no longer wet.
5. Transplant the plants into a loam soil, placing each plant halfway between emitters. (In my

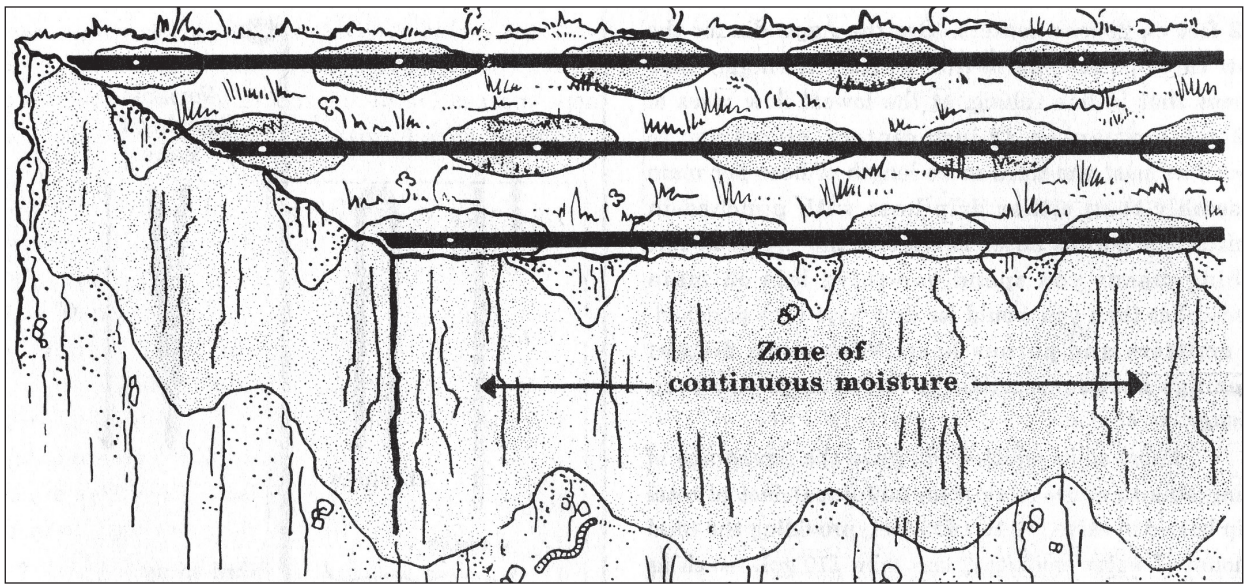

Figure 31: The dry spots around the dark-wet spots on the surface are misleading to many. In reality, the moisture widens as it moves down. Some distance below, the moisture merges together. This means the entire root system gets irrigated. To do this the emitters need to be close enough and the lines of tubing reasonably close. The distance is determined by laying out a short length of in-line tubing, running it for an hour, dig a trench along the length of the tubing, and look to see where the moisture merges. Place the tubing half-way between the merged moist spots. Clay soil has wider moist spots than loam.