



# Chesapeake Master Gardeners

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## *The Teaching Garden (Elaine's Garden)*

### DRIP IRRIGATION

There is an irrigation system at work in this garden, but it is not visible. Polyethylene tubing delivers water directly to the plants' roots underneath the mulch. There are two zones; one along the rear of the garden and one along the front. Each has a 1/2 inch tube main line from which 1/4 inch lines run to each plant. No glue, thread sealant or tape is required. Fittings are available in tees, elbows and adapters, so the lines don't have to run in a straight line. There are many options for water delivery at the plant. This garden uses button drippers that emit one half gallon of water an hour. Some of the larger plants have been circled with a drip line, which is a 1/4 inch line with emitters pre-installed in it every 12 inches. One of the great features of drip irrigation is its flexibility. Lines can be easily added or removed (plugs are sold for those occasions). Emitters can be changed if a plant requires more water.

The benefits of drip irrigation include saving water, time and money and having less weeds. Less water is used because the water is directed at the root zone of each plant. Time is saved because the system is on a timer, and runs without supervision. Money is saved because less water is used, and there are less weeds because the area between plants is not watered. Disease prevention is aided by minimizing water contact with the leaves, stems and fruit of the plants. Having mulch on top of the lines reduces evaporation and makes it more difficult for squirrels to find the lines.

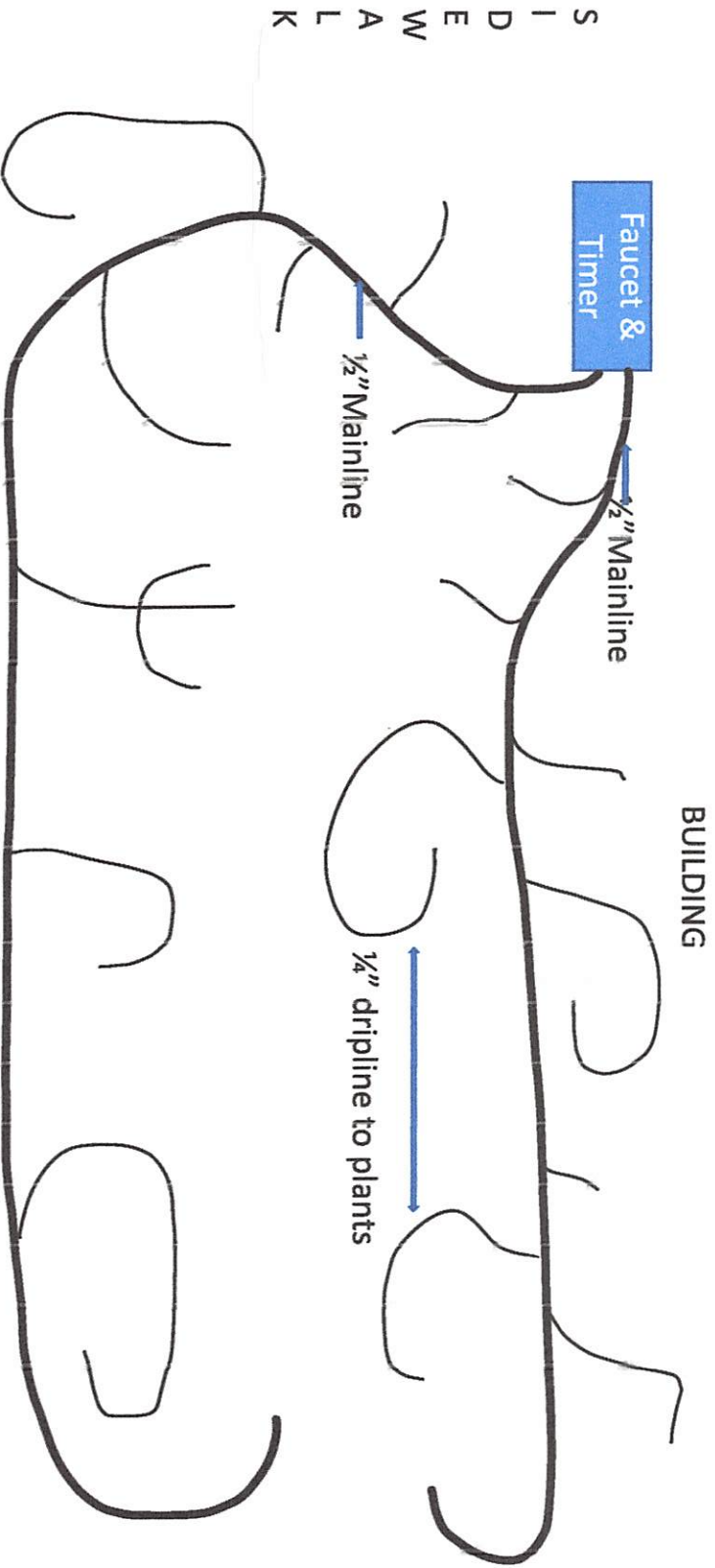
Supplies are available on-line and locally at garden centers and hardware stores.



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**Drip Irrigation Schematic Elaine's Garden**

1/4" drip lines end with emitters on each plant or are spaced 6" driplines