

GN consumer expert **Geoff Hodge** looks at timers to make watering easier

OULDN'T it be great if you had a friend to do your garden watering for you when you were away from home or even in the early hours of the morning - a good time to water most plants.

Well, you can have a friend that will do all this for you - and you don't even have to bribe them! A water timer will do all this and more, and turns a hosepipe or drip irrigation into an automatic watering system.

Most are simple to set up, even those referred to as watering 'computers'. Some are fairly basic and have limited versatility of watering frequency and duration, whereas others can be programmed to water several times a day or at other set day/time intervals.

#### The test

I set up the timers on  $my\,outdoor$ tap with a small drip irrigation system to water five pots. All worked satisfactorily and turned the water on and off as set, so they're all worth buying.

All of the timers were easy to fit to the tap using the screw-on connector, and some come with

adaptors to allow you to connect them to different tap sizes. Some come with a mesh filter to prevent debris getting into the water. And all of them, except the Access model, come with a 20mm (¾in) snap-on hose connector.

All the timers tested are battery operated, but none are supplied with them, and according to most manufacturers the batteries will last a season or a year. Some have a low battery warning indicator, which is very useful.

They all have manual on/off override, so you can use the tap whenever you need to.

# Draper Digital Electronic Water Timer £29.99

This needs simple 'programming' for current time and day, and time and length of the watering cycle using the keypad. It has a comprehensive LCD display. A test button allows you to see all the settings you have set.

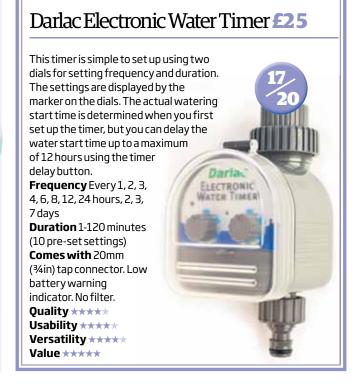
**Frequency** Up to six programmes can be set, varying from six times a day every day, just one day a week to only every two or three days.

**Duration** From 1-360 minutes Comes with 20mm (¾in) and battery warning indicator and filter in 20mm (3/4in) connector. be set to run for up to 3 hours.

WIN A WATER TIMER We have five Draper Best



#### Galcon 9001 E-Z **£52** Due to the positioning of the tap connector, this timer needs a clearance of 4cm (1½in) from the wall and the tap. My tap is only 2.5cm (1in) from the wall, so I had to use a piece of hosepipe to connect it. Simple to set up using two dials for setting frequency and duration. The actual setting is displayed by the marker on the dials. Supplied by Access Garden Products as the Easy Set Dial Tap Timer Frequency Every 3, 6, 12, 24 hours, 2, 3, 4, 7, 14 days Duration 2-540 minutes (10





# Claber Tempo Logic £54.99

Well designed and constructed. display that clearly shows the It is simple to set up and use with just three push buttons. The operating unit has a LED

Comes with 20mm (¾in) tap

connector with filter. No low

settinas)

battery warning.

set watering time and when it is due to start. It can be removed for easier programming away

Quality \*\*\*\*

Usability \*\*\*\*

Versatility \*\*\*\*

from the tap. **Frequency and** duration There are 19 pre-set watering frequencies, from 2 minutes every 8 hours to 90 minutes every 7 days.

Comes with 20mm (¾in) tap connector and filter. Low battery warning indicator. The manual on/off override runs for 5 minutes.

Quality \*\*\*\* Usability \*\*\*\* Versatility \*\*\*\*

# Gardena Water Computer C1030

Plus **£69.99** 

This needs simple 'programming' for current time and day, and time and length of the watering cycle, using the large dial and push buttons. The operating unit has a large LCD display, which clearly shows the set watering times and can be removed for easier programming away from the tap.

Frequency Every 8, 12, 24 hours, every day, on selected days or every second, third or seventh day.

**Duration** From 1 minute to 8 hours

Comes with 13mm (½in), 16mm (5/8in), 20mm (3/4in) and 25mm (1in) tap connectors.



Battery charge indicator and filter. The manual on/off override can be set to run for up to 59 minutes.

Quality \*\*\*\* Usability \*\*\*\* Versatility \*\*\*\*

#### Garden Magic Watering Electronic Timer **£38.95**

Needs simple 'programming' for current time and day, and time and length of the watering cycle, using a series of push buttons. LCD display shows the settings.

Frequency Up to eight programmes can be set from 15 different days-in-the-week settings, varying from just one day a week to every day of the week or even just every other day or just weekends.

**Duration** From 1 minute to 1 day

Comes with 20mm (3/4in) and 2.5cm (1in) tap connector. Low battery warning indicator and filter on 20mm (3/4in) tap connector. Quality \*\*\*\*

Usability \*\*\*\* Versatility \*\*\*\* Value \*

**Suppliers** 

Access Garden Products 01788 822301, www.garden-products.co.uk; Claber, 08456 026696, www.claber.co.uk; Darlac, 01753 547790, www.darlac.com; Draper Tools, 02380 494333 for stockist details, www.draper.co.uk; Gardena from Husqvarna UK, 08448 444558, www.gardena.com; Harrod Horticultural, 08454 025300, www.harrodhorticultural.com; Hozelock, 0121 313 1122, www.hozelock.com

NEXT TIME PRODUCT TESTER GEOFF LOOKS AT SOLAR LIGHTS