

Tips and Caring for Your Soaker Hose

Things You'll Need:

Large tub or wading pool / Scrub brush / Dish washing liquid / Hose valves and end caps

1. Each fall, or at the end of the growing season, remove the hoses from your beds and brush off as much soil and debris from the hoses as possible. Inspect for any obvious breaks, tears and/or deterioration.
2. Find a container large enough to completely immerse the entire hose, remove any fittings, valves, caps, etc. that are attached to the hose and start coiling the hose into the tub. A kids wading pool works the best for this task if you have one but any large "tank" that you have handy will work.
3. Place all of the removable hardware into a container to be cleaned later.
4. As you are coiling the hose into the pool, uncouple any hoses that are still coupled together so they are single units. *Be careful when removing these fittings, as you do not want the hose to break off inside the fitting.*
5. After the hoses are in the tub or pool, add approximately three or four tablespoons of dish washing detergent. Avoid harsh, chlorinated or ammoniated cleaners. These will deteriorate the rubber.
6. Add enough water to cover the hoses. Kids love to help with this. You will need to weigh down the hoses because they float. Let the hoses soak for two to three hours to thoroughly loosen the embedded soil that will have seeped into the rubber pores.
7. Connect the hose to a water source and flush the inside for two or three minutes to remove any bugs, dirt and debris from the inside of hose.
8. After flushing the inside of the hose, close off the opposite end of the hose and turn the water back on to force water from the inside out. Allow the water to flow through the hose pores for five to ten minutes to clean debris from the pores of the hose.
9. With the water still running, thoroughly scrub the outside of the hose to remove any remaining soil. The running water will flush away soils while you scrub.
10. As you are cleaning, note and mark any punctures or other repairs that need to be made. A piece of "twist-tie" wire works well for marking these areas. Repairing soaker hose defects can be done later.
11. After cleaning and marking defects to repair, stretch the hoses out to drain and air dry. Remember to remove any valves, caps, etc. You previously installed for cleaning the hoses.
12. After the hoses are dry, coil up and tie the hoses so they are ready for the next use. If your hoses are not going to be reinstalled immediately, store them inside away from sunlight. Ultraviolet radiation from the sun will deteriorate the rubber.
13. As you coil the hoses, reinstall or replace the hose ends, and couple the ends together. This will keep dirt, spiders, dirt-daubers and other bugs out of your clean hose. If for some reason you can not couple the ends together, you can still cover the ends by placing tape over the open ends.
14. This is the time to make any repairs needed to the hose. If the hose is cut, it will need to be cut in two and the damaged area cut out. A "coupling" is used to connect the two pieces back together.
15. You can also leave your end caps on and fill the hose with vinegar or CLR and let it sit for several hours. This will help remove any mineral deposits that may be clogging your hose. Be sure to thoroughly rinse it out.