

Fine-Tune Your Irrigation System Save Money & See Better Results



Automated irrigation systems offer convenience while protecting your landscape investment. A well-maintained system keeps your lawn and landscape beautiful and healthy, while minimizing water waste.

To raise awareness of the benefits of efficient watering practices, the Irrigation Association has named July Smart Irrigation Month. Make time this summer to be sure you're getting the most out of your irrigation system, while keeping utility bills low and helping to protect the environment.

- Adapt your watering schedule to the weather and the season. Familiarize yourself with the settings on your irrigation controller and adjust the watering schedule regularly.
- Schedule watering for each zone separately. For each area, take into account type of sprinkler, sun or shade exposure, soil type and plant requirements.
- Inspect your system monthly. Check for leaks, broken or clogged heads, and other problems, or engage a certified irrigation professional to regularly check your system. Clean microirrigation filters as needed.
- Adjust sprinkler heads. Remove obstructions that prevent sprinklers from distributing water evenly and make sure you're watering plants, not sidewalks or buildings.
- Have your system audited. Hire a professional to conduct an irrigation audit and uniformity test to make sure each zone is being watered evenly.
- Install an inexpensive rain shutoff switch. Required by law in many states, these money-saving sensors prevent watering in rainy weather and can be retrofitted to almost any system.
- Consider "smart" technology. Climate or soil moisture sensor-based controllers evaluate weather or soil moisture conditions and then automatically adjust the watering schedule to meet the specific needs of your landscape.
- Think about low-volume drip irrigation for plant beds. Install microirrigation for gardens, trees and shrubs to minimize evaporation and runoff. Options include drip (also known as trickle), micro-spray jets, micro-sprinklers and bubbler irrigation.
- Water at the right time of day. Watering when the sun is low, winds are calm and temperatures are cooler minimizes evaporation by as much as 30 percent. The best times to water are late afternoon, evening and just before sunrise.
- Water more often for shorter periods. Setting your system to run for three, 5-minute intervals lets soil absorb more water than watering for 15 minutes at one time.
- Water only when needed. Saturate root zones and let the soil dry. Overwatering results in shallow roots and encourages weeds, disease and fungus growth.

Smart Irrigation Month is an initiative of the Irrigation Association, a non-profit industry organization dedicated to promoting efficient irrigation. Learn more at www.smartirrigationmonth.org.

To find an IA-certified professional to design, install, maintain or audit your irrigation system, visit www.irrigation.org/hirecertified.