



## Resources

### **Water Wise Landscaping and Watering Guide – Water Use-It Wisely**

[www.northgeorgiawater.com/files/WaterWiseLandscapeGuide.pdf](http://www.northgeorgiawater.com/files/WaterWiseLandscapeGuide.pdf)

### **Using Water Wisely with Automated Irrigation Systems**

[pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/C870.htm](http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/C870.htm)

### **Efficient Irrigation – North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service**

[www.bae.ncsu.edu/programs/extension/publicat/wqwm/ag508\\_6.html](http://www.bae.ncsu.edu/programs/extension/publicat/wqwm/ag508_6.html)



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# Landscape Irrigation Watering Guide

*Is your irrigation system as water-efficient as it can be? The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has prepared this guide to help you understand how to water efficiently with your irrigation system. It will help you conserve water and save money at the same time!*



## Water Saving Devices

Take the guesswork out of how much to water!

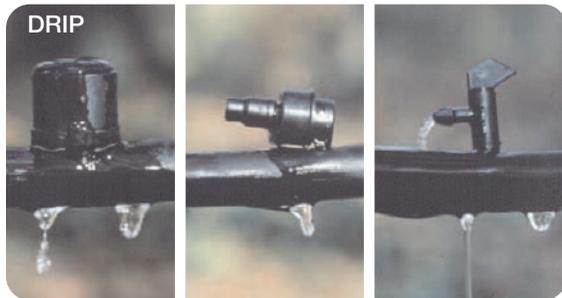
- **Rain sensors** turn off the irrigation system during periods of rain. They are required on all new irrigation systems.



Source: SPWMD

- **Soil Moisture Monitors** detect moisture levels at the root system and override scheduled irrigation if moisture is adequate.

- **Smart Irrigation Controllers** override scheduled irrigation when sufficient moisture is present as determined by soil moisture, rain, wind, slope, soil and plant type information.



Source: UGA Extension Service

**Drip irrigation** applies water slowly and directly to plant roots through small, flexible plastic tubing. Drip irrigation uses less water than traditional sprinkler irrigation and costs less to install. Consider converting beds from sprinkler systems to one of these systems.

## Watering in Georgia

- Georgia has year-round outdoor watering restrictions. Addresses ending in odd numbers can water on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Addresses ending in even numbers can water on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. Outdoor watering is not allowed on Friday.
- Pick one of those days to water your lawn. Water up to an inch on that day each week. One inch a week is sufficient for all turf grasses grown in Georgia.
- If it rains, water less. Georgia averages over 50 inches of rain per year, and for most of the year, irrigating once a week can be excessive. Home-owners with automated irrigation systems are most likely to over-water their landscapes.
- The Atlanta region features mainly clay soils that absorb water slowly. Clay can only absorb up to 1/2 inch of water per hour. Applying more than this quickly leads to puddling and water running off into the streets.

Factors to Consider	Watering Needs	
	Lower	Higher
Plant type	Trees & Shrubs	Turf Grass
Plant Maturity	Established	Newly Planted or Seeded
Soil	Clay	Sandy or Gravelly
Landscape	Flat	Hilly
Sun Exposure	Shade	Full Sun
Mulch	Mulched	None
Irrigation System	Drip	Sprinkler

Source: weather.com

## Water Tips

- Apply water only at the first signs of moisture stress. Signs include wilting, foot-printing or a dull discoloration.
- Hand watering small or isolated dry spots can extend the necessary time between watering the entire lawn.
- Water early in the morning and late at night when less water will be lost to evaporation.
- Plant native and drought resistant trees and shrubs. They use less water and are easier to maintain.



## How Much and When to Water

### A. Test your system.

Test your irrigation system to see how long your sprinklers need to run to apply one inch of water.

1. Place tuna cans around your yard and run each zone in your system for 30 minutes.
2. Measure the amount of water in the cans with a ruler.
3. Determine how long your system would have to run to water 1 inch. For instance, if you measured 1/2 inch, it will take 1 hour to water 1 inch.

### B. Set your timer.

Set your sprinkler timer to water one day each week for one inch either early in the morning or late at night.

- You may need to set your system on shorter, more frequent cycles to allow water to absorb and prevent puddling and runoff.
- Each sprinkler system applies water at different rates. There are two main types of sprinkler heads:

1. Rotor sprinkler heads can apply 1/4 to 1/2 inch of water an hour and can usually run up to 20 minutes before runoff occurs. If your system applies 1/2 inch per hour, set your timer one day a week for six 20-minute cycles with an hour in between for absorption.



Source: UGA Extension Service

2. Spray sprinkler heads can apply 1 to 2 inches of water per hour and can usually run 6 to 8 minutes before runoff occurs. If your system applies 2 inches per hour, set your timer one day a week for five 6-minute cycles with an hour in between for absorption. Observe how your yard is accepting the water and adjust your timer as needed.



Image provided courtesy of Rain Bird Corporation