

Smart Irrigation Systems: A “Greener” Idea



If you're a typical homeowner, you probably put your automatic sprinkler system into the same category as your home's heating and cooling system. You expect it to work reliably and efficiently with minimum fuss. The latest technology offers just that--and more.

A sprinkler system is one area of your home where a little knowledge can go a long way to conserve water while maintaining a healthy yard that's the envy of the neighborhood.

In conjunction with *Smart Irrigation Month* in July, the Irrigation Association® is offering information about efficient irrigation technology and tips. Since it's a peak month for water usage, July is a good time to learn more about making the most of water resources.

The new generation of “smart” sprinkler systems can be viewed as sophisticated communications systems that happen to dispense water, rather than a network of underground valves, pipes and pop-ups controlled by a wall-mounted timer.

Thanks to advances in electronics and communications, sprinkler systems can monitor data, such as climate, site conditions, or soil moisture, and automatically adjust your sprinkler's watering schedule. Smart systems keep your grass green while saving your “green.”

The secret to smart systems is the controller. Smart controllers use either weather and/or site data to automatically determine when and how long to water. Then your sprinklers apply just enough water at exactly the right time in each zone of your yard.

Here are highlights of the substantial benefits that smart controllers offer:

Saves Water

Environmentally friendly smart systems conserve water by watering only as much as needed. Smart sprinklers work with Mother Nature to automatically suspend watering during rain, freezing or high wind conditions or compensate for rainfall. Plus a smart system can keep your lawn and landscape healthier by avoiding the pitfalls of inadequate watering, too frequent watering, or the more common problem of overwatering, which often results in disease or poor root systems.

Saves Money

Because smart systems water only when needed, time the applications to allow water to soak-in, and avoid application when water might evaporate or blow away, you may reduce your annual water bill as much as 30 percent. On top of that, you may qualify for rebates from your local water board or utility for the purchase of specific smart controllers.

Saves Time

Once your irrigation installer has programmed the site data into the smart system, the controller adjusts the watering schedule based upon local conditions and/or soil moisture and by zone. This “set and forget” technology is perfect for frequent travelers and ideal for vacations or second homes used only part of the year.

Adds Convenience

Smart controllers require little direct access, so they provide an excellent solution for sites where it is difficult to access the controller. There's no need to reprogram the controller due to seasonal weather changes.

Upgrading your current controller may be an option. Some new components are designed as easy add-ons to an existing controller, eliminating the need to replace your system's “brains.”

So keep the green where it belongs--on your lawn and in your wallet--with a smart irrigation system. Learn more at www.irrigation.org/smartmonth.htm.

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