



Waterfacts 7

Irrigation systems maintenance.

Regardless of the type of irrigation system you use a regular maintenance program is very important to conserve water. Maintenance for automatic systems must also include a winterization and spring start-up program.

Regular Maintenance

Hose and sprinkler

Make sure hoses are in perfect condition. Hoses use almost 30 litres of water per minute so a leaking hose or coupling can add up to significant water waste. Watch the placement of the sprinkler to avoid watering non-landscape surfaces. Repair or replace your nozzle trigger if it leaks. Nozzle triggers should shut-off completely when you let go of the trigger. Store hoses and sprinklers indoors during frosty weather.

In-ground systems

- Make regular checks (at least monthly) for damaged or missing spray heads, leaking lines and valves.
- Observe if any of the heads are spraying on non-landscaped areas or leaving part of your lawn with brown patches.
- Check if any of the heads are clogged or buried by plant growth or grass.

Micro/Drip Irrigation Systems

There are many advantages of micro/drip irrigation systems. Regular preventative maintenance of a drip system is the key to ensuring the most water efficient operation.

- Every micro/drip system should have a filter. Flushing the filter should be done on a regular basis-weekly for the first few weeks after a new installation or after a dormant period and then every two to four months.
- Observe your plant growth. As your landscape matures, you may need to add, change or remove emitters.
- The system should be flushed after the initial installation, after any repair work and then every three to four months.
- Make sure to regularly check your emitters for clogging or breakage. Also examine your tubing for slits or cracks.

Do your part. 
Every drop counts!

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Spring Start-up

In-ground System

- For sprinklers remove the nozzles from, at the least, the last head on each pipe (but preferably from all) and run the water. Open the valve slowly to prevent damage.
- Check for leaking valves. Often the flexible seals dry out over the winter and leak when the water is turned back on.
- Finally, check the controller for proper run times for each station. If it has a back-up battery, replace it with a fresh one.

Micro/Drip Systems

During the winter months insects and other materials may get into your system. Therefore, it is extremely important before you turn on your system that you thoroughly flush your system. These are steps to do before spring start-up:

- Open the ends of micro/sprays, micro/drip tubes and flush them out by turning on the water.
- Check all emitters for clogging.

Winterization

In-ground system

- Shut off main water source.
- Open manual drain valves to allow for gravity draining, if possible.
- Shut all manual valves and pressurize with compressed air. (Compressors can be rented from a local rental supply, look for high volume low pressure models, or hire a contractor).
- Switch controller to manual operation.
- Advance controller to hold each zone on until heads blow air.
- Repeat for each zone and controller.
- Leave all small brass valves "open" to 45 degrees if double-check valve is installed.
- Return controllers to "OFF" position.
- Disconnect compressor. Leave any manual drains open unless there is possibility of groundwater back up.
- Remember that a qualified contractor can be hired to winterize your complete system.

Micro/Drip Irrigation Systems

- Drain your poly tube or roll it up and store it.
- Remove the battery-operated controller for the season.
- Remove end caps or open hose ends to flush the line.

CRD Water Services

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The content of this fact sheet was reviewed for accuracy by an irrigation professional and a landscape designer.

 50% post-consumer waste