



Resources

Water-Wise Landscape Guide for the Georgia Piedmont

<http://northgeorgiawater.org>

WaterSense Labeled Irrigation Controllers

<https://www3.epa.gov/watersense>

Using Water Wisely with Automated Irrigation Systems

<http://extension.uga.edu/publications>

Landscaping with Native Plants in the Georgia Piedmont

<http://www.gnps.org>

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Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

www.northgeorgiawater.org



Landscape Irrigation Watering Guide



Outdoor watering can make up a significant portion of your water use and cost you money! You can reduce your water bill and save water by ensuring that your irrigation system is as 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.



Water Saving Devices

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



Photo courtesy of James Phillips

◆ **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. Some models can even adjust irrigation schedules based on weather forecasts using WiFi. WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers meet efficiency and performance criteria without overwatering and generating excess runoff.

◆ **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 planting beds from sprinkler systems to one of these systems.



Source: UGA Extension Service

Watering in Georgia

◆ Georgia has year-round outdoor watering requirements. Outdoor watering for purposes of planting, growing, managing or maintaining residential landscapes is allowed only between the hours of 4 p.m. and 10 a.m. If the Georgia Environmental Protection Division declares a drought response, watering restrictions may apply. Go to epd.georgia.gov for more information.

◆ One inch of water a week is sufficient for all turf grasses grown in Georgia.

◆ If it rains, water less. North Georgia averages over 50 inches of rain per year. Homeowners 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.



Water Tips

- ◆ Apply water only at the first signs of moisture stress. Signs include wilting, foot-printing (blades don't bounce back after walking across the lawn) 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.
- ◆ Use a rain gauge to measure weekly rain amounts.

How Much and When to Water

Test your system.

See how long your sprinklers need to run to apply one inch of water.

1. Place empty tuna cans (or similar) 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.

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

Source: weather.com

Set your timer.

Set your sprinkler timer to water one inch per week. Watering should be scheduled between the hours of 4 p.m. and 10 a.m.

- ◆ 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.



ROTOR

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.



SPRAY