



NEWS SPLASH

Summer 2006

SMART WATERING - SAVE WATER, SAVE MONEY!

Our customers are always looking for ways to reduce their water consumption, lower their water bills *and* have a healthy landscape. Here are some tips to help you get on your way to smart watering!

Determine how long you should water

One of the first challenges to smart watering is knowing how long to water. There is no set answer to the question: "How long should I water my lawn?" The reason is that each person's landscape is different. Plant material, soils and microclimates are all unique in each yard. Here are some tips that will help take the mystery out of determining how long you should water your landscape:

Use the IWMS landscape irrigation calculator. The Irrigation Water Management Society (IWMS) has easy-to-use landscape irrigation calculators on its website that can help those customers with automatic irrigation systems set their controllers to maximize water efficiency. You can access their website at www.iwms.org. Click on the link that says "Calculators" which will take you to a web page that allows you to choose either "Sprinkler Scheduler" or "Water Budget Calculator."

- The **Sprinkler Scheduler** will help you generate watering schedules for your automatic irrigation system. You enter the types of plants watered in that zone, and which type of sprinkler heads water that zone. You can enter up to 17 zones on the calculator at one time. The Sprinkler Scheduler will automatically calculate a schedule for you, which you can print out

and place in or near your irrigation controller box. **PLEASE NOTE:** Although the sprinkler scheduler indicates that the watering season is from April to September, use good judgment! If the weather is cool and rainy, you may not even want to turn on your system in April, May or June. There's no need to water your lawn if it doesn't need it!

- The **Water Budget Calculator** will allow you to create a simple water budget for the irrigation months of April through September, calculated in CCF (hundred cubic feet.) You will see how much money you can save by only giving your landscape what it needs.



- **If you don't have an irrigation system**, you can do a "tuna can" test to find out how long to water your landscape. Go to the District's website's conservation page and click on the link "How long should I water my lawn?" (<http://www.sammplat.wa.org/lawnwater.html>) to find instructions on how to conduct a tuna can test. You'll create your own watering schedule that

is adjusted for the spring and fall seasons that you can use each year. In addition, you may want to get a **hose mounted timer** to make sure you don't accidentally leave the sprinkler running for too long. Hose-mounted timers are inexpensive and easy to install. Use your tuna can test results to set times on your hose-mounted timer to shut off your sprinkler to avoid overwatering. If you do not have access to the Internet, please call our office and we will send you the tuna can test information.

Setting your controller - practice makes perfect!

Some of our customers admit that they have an irrigation controller but have no idea how to use it! Remember – **you control the controller**, not the other way around! Here are some tips to help you achieve ultimate mastery of your irrigation controller!

- **Read your owner's manual before attempting to set your controller.** Sometimes your owner's manual can be found inside the irrigation controller box or in the vicinity of the controller. In addition, instructions may be posted inside the controller lid. If you have purchased a new home, be sure to ask your builder to provide you with a copy of the controller manual. If you cannot locate your manual, you can often find irrigation manuals on the Internet. Write down your controller's make and model number and conduct an Internet search on your manufacturer. Many manufacturers have manuals that you can easily download and print out for

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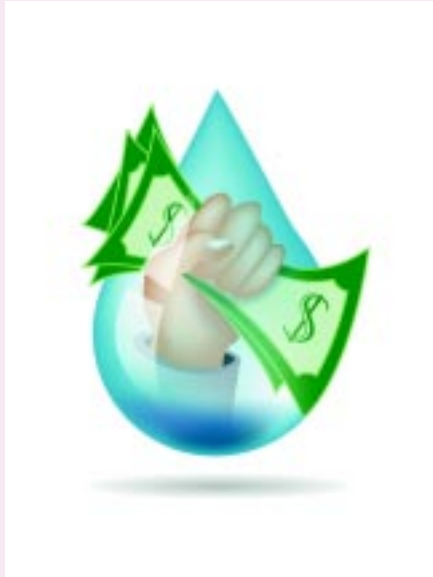
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your reference, or you can call them and request a copy and they will mail one to you.

- **Forget “set it and forget it!”** Many homeowners develop a “set it and forget it” mentality when it comes to their irrigation controllers. They set their controllers in April to meet August’s needs, and don’t touch them again until it’s time to shut down the system in the fall!

You will gain more experience operating your controller by adjusting it on a monthly basis.

Change your controller at the beginning of each month. That way, you can adjust your controller according to the seasons, watering less in the spring and fall and more in the heat of summer. You should also turn your controller off completely during rainy periods.



- **Upgrade your irrigation controller and get a rebate from Cascade Water Alliance!** If you have an older irrigation controller, it might be time for an upgrade. Most of the new irrigation controllers have water saving features such as water budgeting programs. The District is a member of the Cascade Water Alliance, and our customers are now eligible to receive rebates if they replace outdated controllers with new controllers that have water conservation features. Rebates can be as high as \$450 depending on the number of zones and

sensors your controller has installed. For more information, see the “Cascade Water Alliance Irrigation Efficiency Rebates” link on the District’s conservation web page at the following link: <http://www.sammplat.wa.org/IrrigationRebateApplication8-15-05.pdf>.

- **Help your landscaper control your controller.** If you have a landscape company maintain your landscape, ask them how they intend to control your controller. Many landscapers will keep your grass green at any cost, and that cost is usually passed on to you when you pay a huge water bill! You may want to educate your landscaper about watering wisely or find a landscaper who is skilled in irrigation water use efficiency.

■ **Install a rain sensor and get a rebate!** Irrigation systems running in the rain are just wasting water and costing you lots of money, in addition to drowning your landscape! Consider installing a rain sensor to help you save water. Rain sensors shut off your irrigation system automatically during a rain event. They need to be placed in an area clear of vegetation, and need to be tested annually for proper function. **Cascade offers a \$100 rebate to both residential and commercial customers who install rain sensors.** Follow the same link listed earlier in this article about the Cascade irrigation efficiency rebates for more information.

Remember, smart watering will help you save water and save money!

HELP PREVENT WATER THEFT!

You can help protect your drinking water by reporting unauthorized hydrant use. If you observe anyone other than water district or fire



district personnel connected to a fire hydrant, please call the District at (425) 392-6256 as soon as possible! Water district personnel are available 24 hours a day to take your call. Please use the phone number provided on our voice mail for water emergencies to report water theft.

When you call, please include such information as the **address or cross streets where the infraction occurred, vehicle license number, and a description of the vehicle.** Include color, logos and type of truck, such as tanker trucks, hydro-seeders, sweepers, or trailers with tanks. Water district and fire district vehicles will be plainly marked with logos. Please leave a contact phone number where you may be reached if we need further information. Do not approach or try to block vehicles, but report the incident to the District immediately! District personnel will be dispatched to investigate the situation. Contractors are required to call the District daily before utilizing water from a hydrant, and their vehicles must have a permit. The District will fine unauthorized users.

Thank you for your participation in helping to protect our water system from possible contamination and water theft!



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