

Landscape irrigation is often the largest use of water for homes with an irrigation system. Reducing irrigation can save money while leaving more water for our springs and future generations. **The best way to reduce outdoor water use is to only operate your irrigation system manually as needed.** Make sure to follow the mandatory restrictions when you run your system.

Tips For Conserving Water In Your Landscape

- Replace irrigated turf with drought tolerant vegetation. There are many plants, including several Florida natives, that look great with little water.
- Turn your system on occasionally during daylight hours to check for broken or misdirected heads.
- Cap irrigation heads or turn off entire zones that are wasting water on established trees and bushes.
- Choose a water efficient micro-spray or drip irrigation system for plants that need irrigation.
- Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants. This slows down evaporation and reduces weeds.
- Mow grass at the highest recommended height for your lawn type. Not only does this result in less evaporation; it helps promote healthier, drought tolerant grass.
- Wait to water until you see turf with leaf blades folded, blue-gray color, and/or footprints remaining visible.



What to look for in an Irrigation Professional

- ✓ Has State irrigation license or Florida Water Star accreditation
- ✓ Promotes the use of Florida Friendly Landscaping
- ✓ Provides clients with site irrigation sketch, irrigation timer manual, maintenance checklist, and timer settings.

Resources

Alachua County:

www.MyYardOurWater.org

Florida Friendly Landscaping Program™:

www.FloridaYards.org

UF/IFAS Extension:

www.Gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu

Florida Native Plant Society:

www.FNPS.org

St. Johns River Water Management:

www.sjrwm.com/water-conservation

Audubon:

www.Audubon.org/plantsforbirds

Alachua County Environmental

Protection Department

352-264-6800

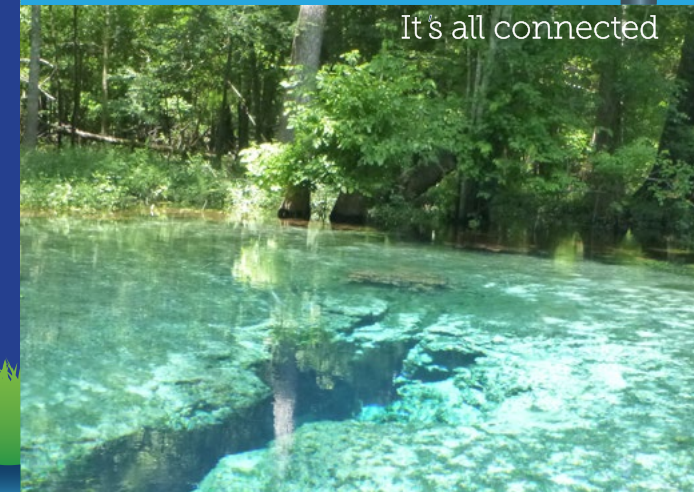
TTY users: please call 711 (FL Relay)

Irrigation@alachuacounty.us

Document available in alternate format upon request.



Automatic Irrigation Systems - Rules and tips for use and maintenance



Exemptions

The irrigation restrictions apply throughout Alachua County to water withdrawn from wells, lakes, creeks, and city water. The following are exempt from the restrictions: reclaimed water, micro-irrigation, hand-held hose with a shut-off nozzle, new landscaping for the first 60 days, watering in of fertilizers and pesticides, operation for maintenance or repairs, vegetable gardens, fruit trees, agricultural and nursery operations, recreational fields, and golf courses.

Setting Your Irrigation Timer

- Timers generally have four criteria that need to be set: current time and date, watering days, watering start time, and watering duration for each zone.
- Watering start time should typically only be set for a single zone. The rest of the zones will then run consecutively.
- To water on a single schedule, be sure that only one program (A, B, C, etc.) has a start time entered.
- A default program will take over if power is lost. Reset your irrigation timer after a power outage.
- Try reducing your run times to save water. If you have a zone that is watering established shrubs, set the run time for 0 minutes to skip the zone.
- To avoid runoff, use Cycle and Soak watering (divides the watering time into smaller increments).

Irrigation Restrictions - applies to wells and city water

Watering is allowed before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.

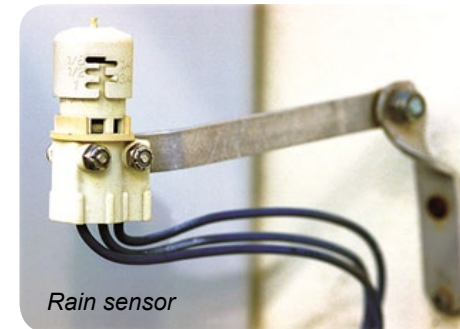
Location	Summer 2 nd Sun in Mar - 1 st Sat in Nov	Winter 1 st Sun in Nov - 2 nd Sat in Mar
Odd House #	Wed and/or Sat	Sat
Even House #	Thur and/or Sun	Sun
Other residential/ commercial	Tue and/or Fri	Tue

Irrigation is limited to no more than one hour or ¾ inch per irrigation zone per day.

Rain Shut-Off Device – Required By Law!

All automatic sprinkler systems are required by law to have a functioning rain shut-off device. These devices prevent irrigation when there is sufficient moisture.

- A rain sensor is a basic shut-off device that can be set to prevent irrigation following rain. The device must be placed where it receives unobstructed rainfall but not within reach of sprinklers. Rain sensors should be tested at least annually and need to be replaced on average every three years. Make sure your rain sensor is set to “active” at the controller.
- More advanced types of rain shut-off devices include soil moisture sensors and weather-based smart controllers, which are now required for new systems. These devices cost more money up front but pay for themselves over time through increased water savings. Hiring an irrigation professional is recommended for correct installation.



Rain sensor

Irrigation Efficiency Code

If you are planning to install a new irrigation system or modify more than 50% of your system by area, the system must adhere to the design and maintenance standards of the Alachua County Irrigation Efficiency Code. Homeowners planning on doing the work themselves should call 352-264-6800 to consult with County staff.



A backflow preventer and regular testing are required by law to prevent irrigation water from flowing back into our drinking water.

Required maintenance

- Ensure the system is inspected at least annually for leaks, overspray onto pavement, misaligned heads, heads that may be capped, and that the rain shut-off device is functioning.



Sprinkler heads that are not adjusted can waste water by spraying onto paved areas.

Courtesy of SJRWMD

Without proper maintenance, spray heads can become too low to the ground to be effective.



Courtesy of SJRWMD