

Water Efficiently Outdoors

There are many different things you can do to water efficiently. Here are a few that I would recommend:

Gator Bags - Use tree gators (gator bags) to water trees during water restrictions. Using the sprinkler zone to water the tree can use up to 20 gallons of water per minute. Filling a Gator Bag with water hose uses 20 gallons of water or the same amount as running the zone for 1 minute.

Soaker Hose – A soaker hose 8” to 12” off the foundation of a house during summer heat should be used to keep the soil tight against the concrete foundation

Walking Your System – during summer months or anytime you are using your sprinklers, check each zone during the day to detect leaks or malfunctioning heads. One of the most common water wasters is undetected leaks on sprinklers that run in the middle of the night.

Winter time Watering – Usually in December and January it is not necessary to water grass at all. Winter time is a good time to manually water once every 10 or 12 days while leaving the controller in the “off” position most of the time.

Fix Dry Spots with Hardware Not Increased Minutes – Usually when a homeowner sees a hot spot or yellow grass in the summer, he/she will increase the time on that zone. It is better to add a head, change a nozzle, or raise a head to get the same result without increasing time on EVERY head on that zone.

Cycle and Soak – Try putting down lawn water in small doses at least one hour apart. With slow absorbing clay soil, this will prevent run-off and insure that the water purchased by the homeowner will go to benefit the landscape. Two or three start times with short run times on your water day will be the best way to cycle and soak.

Restrictions – Pay close attention to Newspapers, or better yet, check the City of Frisco website for day of the week watering restrictions. Never water between 5am and 8am or between 10am and 6pm. Drip irrigation is exempt from restrictions in most cases.

Controller Problems – Consider replacing worn out or malfunctioning irrigation controllers with new ET based controllers. Check under “Water Wise” on our website for approved controllers and information on our \$100 REBATE!

Rain/Freeze Sensors – Rain/Freeze sensors require regular maintenance. The wireless transmitter on the side of the house or on the fence requires a new battery every 2 to 3 years (most installers now use wireless sensors). It also has a small cap on top that needs to be removed and cleaned from time to time (spider webs, dead critters, ect.). However, the best rain/freeze sensor is the homeowner turning the system “off” before a

freeze. 99% of controllers retain the program even in the “off” position. Just turn the controller back to “automatic” or “run” and normal scheduled watering will resume.

Drip Irrigation – Consider changing flower beds to Drip Irrigation. Read the article “*Converting Spray Zone to Drip Irrigation*” located with the other Mike’s Advice Articles to find out more, and search “drip irrigation” on the web for different ways to convert from sprays.

Valve Boxes – Keep electronic control valve boxes weed-free, or draw a map of their location. Several years down the road, many sprinkler problems will need to be repaired inside these boxes. Knowing the location of each box will save money if you don’t need to hire someone to find them for you with a valve locator.