

Generic Sprinkler Program Recommendation

A sprinkler system is a great tool for watering your lawn and landscaping. Unfortunately, if not properly programmed to your specific property conditions, and adjusted 15-20 times throughout the year, it can be your worst enemy causing numerous weeds, severe damage and using excessive water.

Assess Current Layout:

There are 4 types of sprinkler heads: fixed heads produce a fixed spray to a small area; rotary heads rotate as the water is being sprayed to a large area. A drip system uses a hose with numerous holes which allow water to seep slowly into the ground; bubblers are used around the base of trees and large shrubs.

Your system is divided into several zones. Each zone should be operated for 1-2 minutes; note the head type, plant type (shrubs, Bermuda or St Aug), and area of property along with sun exposure for each zone. Full sun areas receive direct sunlight more than 80% of each daylight period. Record a list as follows:

Zone	Heads	Plant Type	Area	Sun Exposure
1	Drip	Shrubs	Front beds	Partial shade
2	Fixed	Bermuda	Front Yard	Full sun
3	Fixed	St Aug	Left side yard	Full shade
4	Rotary	Bermuda	Far Back yard	Partial shade
5	Fixed	Bermuda/Shrubs	Near Back yard	Mostly shade
6	Fixed	Bermuda	Right side yard	Partial shade

Ensure each head is not obstructed by grass or shrubs. Raise heads as needed to ensure proper disbursement of water from each head. Ensure the spray of rotary heads is covering the entire zone; adjust nozzles to correct length of spray.

Run/Soak via multiple Start Times:

Your lawn requires deep watering no more than 2 days per week at 3-4 day intervals. Clay soils are slow to absorb water; therefore, you must use the Run/Soak process. This process applies a small amount of water followed by a period of time to allow this application to soak into the soil; the process is then repeated at least 2 more times. This will move water beyond 0.5" into the soil which is necessary to ensure the products we apply reach the root levels. Most control units allow you to program at least 3 start times for each program. Set the 1st start time for 1AM, 2nd for 3AM and 3rd for 5AM.

Programming Run Times:

Begin by ensuring the Seasonal/Water Budget feature is set at 100%. If your system does not have this feature, it is advisable to install a unit which does; otherwise, you must adjust each zone's run time throughout the year to compensate for changes in temperatures. This would be the best time to upgrade to a Smart System – call our office for more information.

Zero out each run for all programs, otherwise you may have a sleeper program operating. Create your watering plan on Program A. Most properties have less than 8 zones; however, larger properties will have more. It may not be possible to water your entire property on the same program if you have more than 10-12 zones.

When completed with programming, total the amount of run times for all zones and add 20%. If this total is greater than 100 minutes you need to divide the system into multiple programs and operate the added program(s) on the day after Program A operates.

Program Run Times in minute increments

Plant Type	Fixed	Rotary	Drip	Bubbler
Shrubs	3-6	8-16	5-10	2-4
Trees	3-4	8-10	5-7	2-3
St Augustine	3-6	8-16	5-10	N/A
Bermuda	4-8	10-20	6-12	N/A

The lowest number is full shade while the highest is full sun. The north facing and the sides of the house are almost always full shade and should be programmed at the lowest run time.

After 2-3 weeks of using this process, walk your property around 10 AM on the day of watering to check for excessively wet areas. If the soil in a zone is too wet, reduce the run time for that zone by 1 minute and recheck in 2 weeks.

Seasonal/Water Budget Adjustments:

The Seasonal/Water Budget feature allows you to modify the entire program run times by one adjustment to compensate for variations in temperatures. If you monitor the weather effectively, using this feature will ensure proper amounts of water are applied to your property; at least 15 adjustments throughout the year will be required. Use the following chart to help determine the appropriate setting based upon current high temperatures:

Seasonal/Water Budget Settings

Avg. High Temp	%
<40	0
40-50	10
**50-60	20-40
**60-70	40-60
**70-80	60-80
80-90	80-90
90-100	90-100
100-110	100-110

**Morning dew adds to soil moisture which decreases irrigation requirements.

NOTE: Turn the system off when nighttime temperatures are below 40 degrees to prevent damage to your plants and sprinkler system.

Rain:

When it has recently rained or rain is forecasted, turn your system off and leave it off until 7 days after rainfall has ended. As a backup, you should install a rain/freeze sensor to interrupt the system when you are not at home. A rain sensor should not be relied upon to prevent irrigation during the rainy seasons where rain is received every 4-5 days. During these seasons, turn off the system until it has been 7 days without rainfall.