Sprinkler Spruce-Up!

Sprinkler It’s Time to Start a Spruce-Up!

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drip irrigation) or microsprays. With microirrigation, water can be directed to the root zone, where plants need it most. Learn more at www.epa.gov/watersense/microirrigation.

Select a WaterSense Labeled Irrigation Controller

Irrigation controllers, normally located inside the garage or on an outside wall, automatically activate your system. They can be clock-timed controllers, or smart controllers that schedule irrigation based on the weather or moisture in the soil. WaterSense labeled weather-based irrigation controllers do the thinking for you in terms of when and how much to water, based on local weather and landscape conditions. When installed and programmed properly, WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers can save an average home nearly 7,600 gallons of water annually over a clock-timed controller. If you’re not ready to replace your controller, there are WaterSense labeled models that upgrade your existing controller to make it weather-based. Learn more at www.epa.gov/watersense/irrigation-controllers.

If you’re not ready to replace your clock-timed irrigation controller, update it with the seasons to avoid overwatering during rainy months or cooler temperatures. If you notice that runoff occurs when you water, consider breaking up the irrigation into smaller intervals with breaks in between to allow the water to seep into the soil. For tips on adjusting your irrigation controller, visit www.epa.gov/watersense/watering-tips.

For more information about sprucing up your sprinkler and other smart watering ideas, visit www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoors.

Cover controller image courtesy of Rachio; back page controller and interior spread valve box photo courtesy of Hunter Industries Incorporated; and interior spread sprinkler photos courtesy of Rain Bird Incorporated.
Because many irrigation pipes are underground, it may be difficult to identify loose pipe connections. Between irrigation cycles, look for areas of the landscape with water pooling on the surface, which could indicate an underground leak. Check the valve boxes that house controls and other components underground to make sure that valves are securely connected and can close completely, so they do not slowly seep water even when they are turned off. Installing a flow meter can also help you know when your system has a leak.

Direct Sprinklers for Best Water Coverage

Do your sprinklers spray your driveway, house, or sidewalk? Direct them towards the landscape to avoid sending runoff—and possible pollution—down the storm drain. You (or a professional) should be able to adjust each sprinkler nozzle so the spray is as wide or as narrow as necessary. For best results, the water from one sprinkler head should just reach the sprinkler head next to it, known as head-to-head coverage. Keep sprinkler heads vertical and avoid tilting for best lawn coverage.

For watering flower gardens, shrubs, and trees, consider using microirrigation (also referred to as...