

JUNE Dirt - Lawn Sprinklers 101

from the Silver Ridge Park - Westerly
Garden Committee 2025

For those of you who currently use an automatic sprinkler system to water your grass, here are some tips to save water, save money on your electric bill and save wear-and-tear on your system.

1- Operate your sprinkler system only during pre-dawn hours for most efficient watering. If it takes 2 hours to go through all of your zones, then your sprinkler should turn on at 5am and go off at 7am or you will lose moisture due to evaporation once the sun comes up. Early-morning watering (instead of at night) also gives the grass blades a chance to dry out during the daylight hours which will help stop any fungal issues on your lawn. You also do not need to water your lawn every day. Typically 1" of water per week is sufficient for most grass types and it encourages the grass to grow deeper roots to better sustain itself.



2- Your sprinkler system should have a 'smart rain-sensor' built into it. This device will tell your system when it is raining outside and that there is no need to operate at that time. Smart sensors are worth the investment as they can significantly reduce your water usage, save money on your electric bill that runs your pump and minimize wear-and-tear on your irrigation system. If enough rain has fallen, then the sensors let the timer know to skip the next cycle and not run. Most of us do not pay for our sprinkler water, but it is very wasteful on our Pine Barrens groundwater if your sprinkler system is running during a rainstorm. Rain sensors will pay for themselves over time.

3- Do not irrigate your driveway or the sidewalk. If after your sprinklers have turned off and you see water running down the curb into the street, something is wrong. You either have improperly positioned sprinkler heads watering your hard-surfaces, or you are running the system too long or there is a busted sprinkler head. Find out the problem and get it fixed.

Whether it falls out of the sky or comes out of our pipes, water keeps our lawns and plants green and growing. The reason we can live on this planet is because of water! Is it just a coincidence that water covers about 70% of the Earth's surface and our human bodies are made up of about 70% water?

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