

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 conserve irrigation water 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.
- 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.
- Collect rain water in rain barrels and cisterns for irrigation uses.



### 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](http://www.MyYardOurWater.org)

Florida Friendly Landscaping Program™:

[www.FloridaYards.org](http://www.FloridaYards.org)

UF/IFAS Extension:

[www.Gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu](http://www.Gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu)

Florida Native Plant Society:

[www.FNPS.org](http://www.FNPS.org)

St. Johns River Water Management:

[www.sjrwmd.com/waterwiselandscapes](http://www.sjrwmd.com/waterwiselandscapes)

**Alachua County Environmental Protection Department**

**352-264-6800**

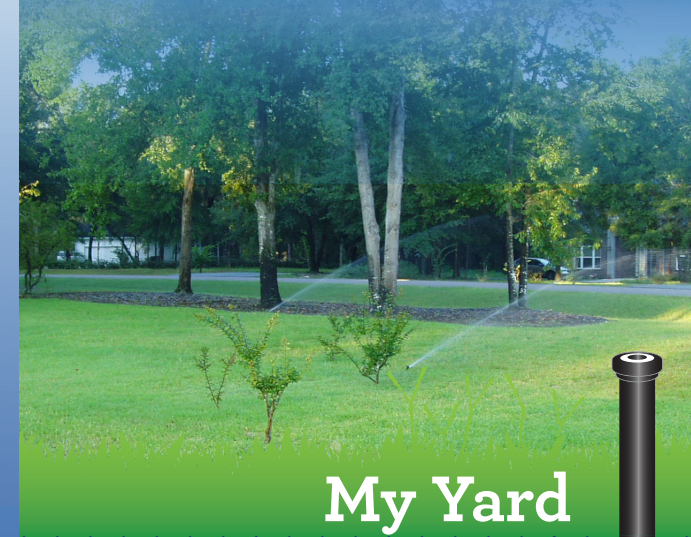
**TTY users: please call 711 (FL Relay)**

**[Irrigation@alachuacounty.us](mailto:Irrigation@alachuacounty.us)**

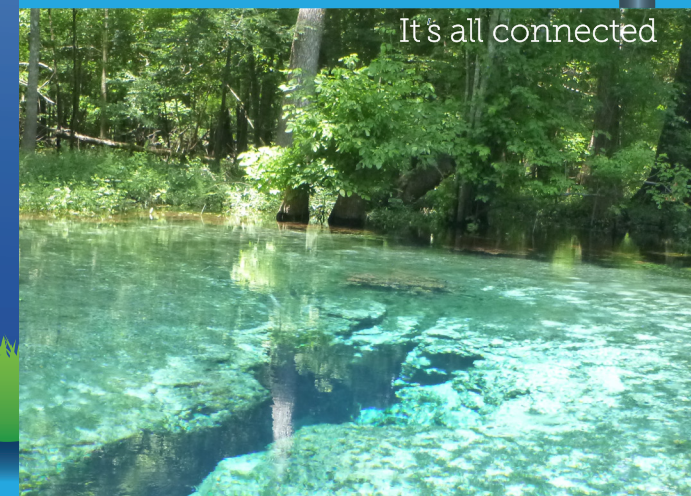
*Document available in alternate format upon request.*



## Automatic Irrigation Systems - Rules and tips for use and maintenance



**My Yard**  
**Our Water**



## 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 only once during the day, 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.
- Irrigation is limited to no more than one hour or  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch per irrigation zone per day, but your landscape may need much less than this. 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.

## Irrigation Restrictions - applies to wells and city water

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

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

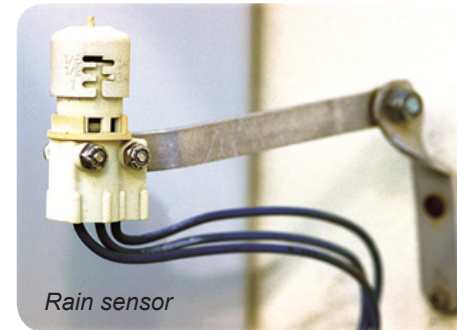
## Rain Shut-Off Device – Required By Law!

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  $\frac{1}{8}$ th to 1 inch of rain. The device should 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.

To test your rain sensor, saturate the device with water from a hose and then turn on your irrigation system manually. If your system runs, your rain sensor likely needs to be replaced.

More advanced types of rain shut-off devices include soil moisture sensors and weather-based smart controllers. 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 rain shut-off device functioning.
- Systems with known leaks shall not be operated until the leaks are repaired.



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



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

Courtesy of SJRWMD