

WaterSense Labeled Outdoor Products

Facts and Tips

Use the following facts and figures when talking to consumers about why they should hire a certified irrigation professional and choose WaterSense labeled products.

Irrigation Water Waste Facts

- Residential outdoor water use accounts for nearly 8 billion gallons of water each day across the United States, mainly for landscape irrigation. As much as 50 percent of that water can be wasted due to evaporation, wind, or runoff caused by inefficient irrigation methods and systems.
- Homes with automatically timed irrigation systems use significantly more water outdoors than those without them due to improper scheduling and inefficiencies in the system. A system that isn't properly programmed or operated can waste thousands of gallons of water annually.
- Just one broken or missing sprinkler head in your system could also waste as much as 25,000 gallons of water and hundreds of dollars over a six-month irrigation season if it is not repaired.
- Auditors and maintenance professionals who are certified by WaterSense labeled programs are trained to inspect or maintain irrigation systems to be more efficient.

WaterSense Labeled Irrigation Controllers

Irrigation controllers are the heart of a sprinkler system; they are often linked to a timer to schedule watering. WaterSense labels two types of irrigation controllers that can help make landscape irrigation more water-efficient than a traditional clock-based controller:

- [Weather-based irrigation controllers](#) use local weather data and landscape conditions to tailor watering schedules.
- [Soil moisture-based irrigation controllers](#) (also known as soil moisture sensors, or SMSs) monitor moisture levels in the soil to stop scheduled irrigation when water is not needed.
- WaterSense labeled controllers can be stand-alone controllers or “add-on” or “plug-in” devices that can be used in tandem with an existing controller to water more efficiently.
- Some WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers can connect right to your smart phone, so you can control your irrigation wherever you go.
- Both types of controllers are independently certified for efficiency and performance; they can save thousands of gallons of water annually compared to clock-based controllers and support a healthy, beautiful landscape.
- Controllers should be programmed for water efficiency with a seasonal adjustment to avoid overwatering or underwatering based on the needs of the landscape.

WaterSense Labeled Spray Sprinkler Bodies

When a sprinkler system operates at a water pressure higher than what is recommended for a landscape irrigation system, it can cause excessive flow rates, misting, fogging, and uneven coverage. [WaterSense labeled spray sprinkler bodies](#) with integral pressure regulation are independently certified to save water and perform well by:

- Controlling sprinkler pressure to ensure a proper flow of water to the nozzle when system pressure is too high.
- Ensuring the nozzles generate the right amount of water spray and coverage for more uniform distribution of water across the landscape.
- Reducing misting and fogging.

Other Outdoor Water Saving Facts and Tips

Use these facts and tips to promote more efficient landscape planting and watering techniques.

Microirrigation

In addition to WaterSense labeled products, a certified irrigation professional can help homeowners create an irrigation system that saves water by design.

- [Microirrigation](#) delivers water directly to the root zone of plants, where it is needed most.
- Drip irrigation, one type of microirrigation, delivers the water slowly and over a longer period of time, preventing runoff and reducing evaporation.
- Microirrigation systems use 20 to 50 percent less water than conventional spray sprinkler systems.

Hydrozoning

If you're planting a new landscape, consider incorporating "hydrozones," or irrigation zones based on plants' water needs.

- Plants of similar types and watering needs should be planted together so they can receive the same amount of water applied by one irrigation zone.
- Many controllers allow users to set up different watering schedules for different hydrozones; use the zone features of your controller to water more efficiently.
- Each hydrozone schedule should also account for the type of sprinkler, shade, or sun exposure.

Cycle and Soak

The "cycle and soak" method divides irrigation cycles into shorter runtimes, allowing water to soak into the soil between irrigation events. This prevents water from running off the landscape when the soil types such as clay are not able to soak it up fast enough.

Rain Gardens

Rain gardens are areas of a landscape that collect and [soak up the rain](#) before it can flow onto a hard surface, preventing flooding and pollution in storm sewers. Planted with grasses and flowering perennials, rain gardens can be a cost effective and beautiful way to reduce runoff from a property. They can also provide food and shelter for butterflies, song birds, and other wildlife.

Mulch and Soil Health

Mulch makes landscapes attractive and adds an extra layer between plant roots and air, helping to protect plants in a variety of ways.

- Mulch helps reduce evaporation, allows soil to retain water, and reduces watering time.
- Mulch inhibits weed growth, prevents soil erosion, and moderates soil temperature.
- Mulching to a depth of three to four inches provides the right coverage for most plants.
- Choose a mulch type based on plant varieties and their soil needs.
 - Organic mulch such as hardwood chips, straw, leaves, pine needles, or grass clippings adds nutrients as it decomposes.
 - Inorganic mulches like rocks, pebbles, or gravel can help eliminate weeds, but in sunny areas they can radiate large amounts of heat and promote water loss.