

Take Control of Your Controller

One of the smartest things a gardener can do is regularly adjust the settings on their irrigation controller—you may know it as the sprinkler timer or clock. Most houses have a controller installed to water the yard on a set schedule. That schedule should change with the weather—at least quarterly or better yet, monthly. But how do you figure out how long to run the irrigation system? The good news is there is free online watering scheduling calculator available at beyondthedrought.com. All you need is access to a computer, your zip code, and to answer a few questions about your landscape. You can then print out a schedule to set your irrigation controller. If you don't know how your controller works, read the manual—lost ones can be replaced by printing one from the manufacturer's website. There are a few points to remember to make the most of your irrigation water.

Adjust and tune up the system before you start using it in spring, break up the run times if water runs off the lawn, turn off the system when it's raining—even if the schedule says to water, and check your soil's moisture level with a shovel. If you need more help than this article provides, contact your local water provider—many provide assistance to their customers, including how-to videos, water wise house calls and rebates.

For more tips go to cecolusa.ucanr.edu