

# Take Control of Your Controller

If your irrigation system runs on a clock timer, it can be easy to “set it and forget it.” That means you could be watering unnecessarily during rain storms, missing your plants entirely during windy weather, or letting the sun soak up plants’ water. Here are some tips to get your controller under control and reduce outdoor water waste:

- Many controllers allow users to set up different watering schedules for different hydrozones; use the zone features of your controller to water more efficiently.
- Schedule clock timers to avoid the hottest time of day so your water doesn’t evaporate away.
- Just like your wardrobe, when the seasons change, so should your irrigation schedule. Summer might require two to three watering sessions per week. In fall or winter, even weekly irrigation could waste water in some areas.



When temperatures drop, it’s time to update your irrigation schedule.

- If you live in a colder climate where pipes can freeze, it’s a good idea to drain and shut down your irrigation system.
- Install a rain or soil sensor to turn off the system when the weather turns wet.
- Don’t forget to check with your local utility if there are any outdoor watering restrictions due to water shortages, and for tips about how often to water.

For additional tips on preventing outdoor water waste, visit [www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoors](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoors).

*Photos on the cover provided courtesy of Hunter Industries, Inc. (top photo) and Rachio (bottom photo).*



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## Is Your



## Watering

## Under



## Control?



If you have an automatic irrigation system, it probably has a controller you can program to water your landscape regularly. But if that controller is not programmed to adjust during seasonal or weather changes, you could waste water or damage your plants. Get your watering under control and maintain curb appeal with a few simple steps to manage your controller!

## Plant the Seeds of Savings

Good watering habits start when designing a landscape; group plants that have similar watering needs together in “hydrozones.” It’s important to know what your soil type and plant needs are before you set a watering schedule. New plants need more water, but once your landscape is established, you can reduce watering frequency.



As much as 50 percent of the water we use outdoors is lost due to wind, evaporation, and runoff caused by inefficient irrigation methods and systems!

If you notice water pooling or running off your site, because you have slopes or tightly packed clay soil, you might want to use the “cycle and soak” method, because it allows water to soak in the soil between irrigation sessions.

## Get Smart When It Comes to Watering

An irrigation controller turns your system on and off, and there are many different types of controllers that will help you save water when programmed correctly.

**Clock-based** controllers allow you to manually program a weekly watering schedule, but you must remember to change the schedule when the seasons change.

**Smart controllers** tailor watering schedules to actual site conditions. Some are based on local weather data; some use soil moisture sensors to avoid unnecessary watering. Some clock-timers can be connected to a plug-in or add-on device that enables it to function as a smart controller.

**Wi-fi or Bluetooth®-enabled** controllers are clock-based or smart controllers that connect to your mobile device. Some manufacturers provide wi-fi compatible upgrades to older controller models.



Image courtesy of Rachio

No matter how your irrigation system is controlled, it’s important to perform regular maintenance. Check for leaking pipes or broken sprinkler heads before the weather turns warmer and make sure sprinklers are not spraying the pavement. If you need help installing, maintaining, or auditing your system, look for an irrigation professional certified by a WaterSense labeled program, who has demonstrated knowledge on water-saving techniques, at [www.epa.gov/watersense/find-pro](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/find-pro).

## Don’t Want to Worry? Get a WaterSense Labeled Controller

WaterSense labeled weather-based or soil moisture-based irrigation controllers are smart controllers that have been independently certified for efficiency and performance. Replacing a standard clock timer with a WaterSense labeled model can save homeowners and businesses 7,600 to 15,000 gallons of water annually, depending on the type of controller.



For more information about WaterSense labeled soil- or weather-based irrigation controllers, visit [www.epa.gov/watersense/irrigation-controllers](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/irrigation-controllers).

