A large, vibrant green lawn is being watered by a sprinkler system. A prominent, wide arc of water is captured mid-air, spraying from a nozzle in the lower right towards the upper left. The background is filled with lush green trees under a clear blue sky. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a warm day.

YOUR GUIDE TO HOME IRRIGATION SYSTEMS



An irrigation system can be an excellent addition to your home, helping you keep your plants and lawn lush and green even during the high heat of summer.

Automatic systems take less time, effort, and water.

Today, home irrigation systems are quite discreet. Often, the majority of components are in-ground. Choosing the right irrigation system will depend on your needs and preferences, as well as the features of your lawn and landscaping. Let's take a look at everything you should know about home irrigation systems.

THE BENEFITS OF AN AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION SYSTEM

A home irrigation system can be a major investment, but it's one that saves you time, money, and water. And who doesn't love the look of a perfectly green lawn and a lush, vibrant garden? Let's take a look at the major benefits of a home irrigation system.

- **Increase your home's value.** A home irrigation system is an excellent way to add value to your home. Believe it or not, your landscaping can constitute up to 20 percent of your home's value. A home with a lush lawn and thriving plants and trees without a doubt will be worth more than a comparable home with dry and wilted plant life.
- **Boost watering efficiency.** A home irrigation system is much more efficient than manual watering, saving valuable time, energy, and of course, water! Most irrigation systems have automated capabilities, meaning you don't have worry about remembering to run them. You won't have to spend time hauling a manual sprinkler out onto your yard every morning or moving it around to ensure that the yard is evenly watered. In addition, because many systems have capabilities that adjust water based on weather conditions, you will likely see a decline in your water bill.
- **Prevent diseases, weeds, and fungi.** Diseases and fungi can do unsightly damage to your lawn, causing issues such as brown rings and dead patches. Regular, efficient watering helps keep your lawn healthy.



THE PIECES OF AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM

IRRIGATION SYSTEMS ARE MORE THAN JUST A FEW STRATEGICALLY PLACED SPRINKLERS.

A well-functioning irrigation system has a number of different parts and components, including an automated sprinkler control box, piping, sprinkler control wires, and the sprinklers themselves.

Of course, sprinklers are one of the most important elements of an irrigation system. Home irrigation systems utilize two primary types of sprinklers: rotating sprinklers or “rotors” for larger areas, and sprinklers that spray in a fan-shaped pattern for small areas. The specific placement and type of sprinklers will largely depend on the size of your lawn, as well as your landscaping and watering needs. An irrigation expert can help you pick out the sprinklers that are right for you and your irrigation system.

INSTALLING AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM

When professionals install your irrigation system, they will consider a number of factors in order to ensure effective watering and efficiency, including coverage and head placement. While this might sound simple, it is actually quite complex. An irrigation system needs to be able to water your entire lawn. This requires proper head spacing and placement.

Systems that are poorly designed won't achieve comprehensive coverage. Uneven watering can lead to unsightly brown spots or waterlogged areas, neither of which is good for your lawn's health or appearance. All in all, it is critical to ensure that qualified, trained professionals install your irrigation system. It isn't just the quality of the system that matters when it comes to effectiveness and efficiency, but also how the various components are set up and positioned.



In fact, a properly designed system can save between 10 percent and 30 percent on water usage compared to improperly or poorly designed systems.

YOUR SPRINKLER SYSTEM AND WATER CAPACITY: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



To determine the amount of water available for the system, you will need to consider water pressure (PSI), which you determine by attaching a pressure gauge to the outside faucet closest to the water meter. Keep in mind when you do this, you will want to make sure that all other faucets on the premises are shut off. You will also need to consider water volume (GPM). This can be ascertained by doing a flow

test. By opening the faucet and measuring how long it takes to fill up a 5 gallon bucket you can determine your gallons per minute. The maximum available flow can also be determined by checking the size of your water meter and the service line into your house. However this is only a guideline and you should always test the flow to verify your GPMs. All irrigation systems should be designed with your water capacity in mind.

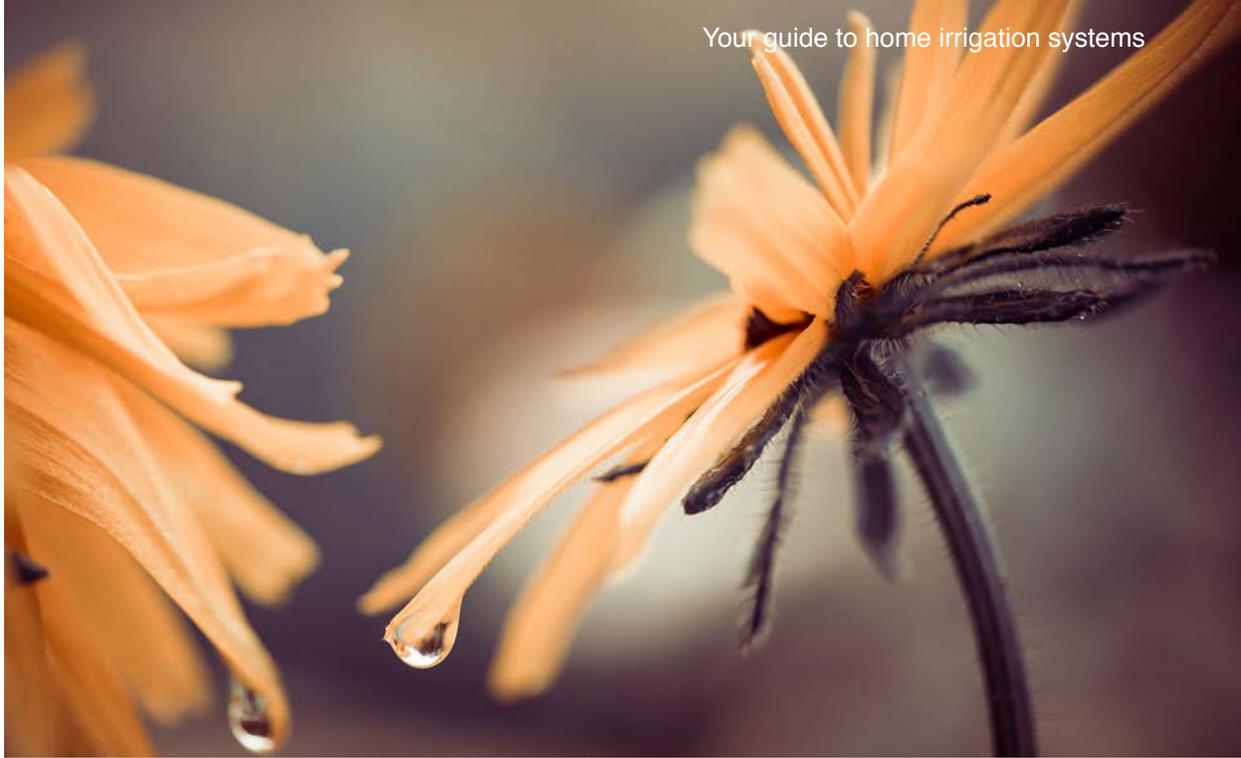
MAXIMIZING YOUR IRRIGATION SYSTEM'S EFFICIENCY

Maximizing efficiency not only optimizes the health of your lawn and plants, but can also substantially shrink your water bill. How can you maximize your irrigation system's efficiency? Be sure to keep the following in mind.

- **Use a smart water controller.** Smart water controllers will adjust the amount of water applied to your lawn based on rainfall. When you're in the throes of a heavy drought, more water will be applied than if you've seen thunderstorms for a week straight. Research shows that these controllers can cut water consumption by 20 to 50 percent, which adds up to a noticeable savings on your water bill. If you don't want to invest in a smart controller, a rain shutoff switch is a less expensive option that shuts off your system automatically whenever it is raining. A rain shutoff switch will typically reduce water consumption by 15 percent.



- **Opt for high-efficiency nozzles.** High-efficiency nozzle heads use up to 30 percent less water than traditional nozzle heads. They are also specially designed to minimize wind drift in order to ensure that water is spread out evenly across a landscape.



- **Opt for drip-in planting beds and shrub areas.** A drip irrigation system, as opposed to a traditional irrigation system, in your planting beds and shrub areas is an excellent way to maximize efficiency. Drip irrigation systems, including micro-spray jets, micro-sprinklers, and bubbler irrigation, target plants more effectively with slow, direct water application directly to plant roots. This minimizes evaporation and runoff, ensuring that more water from the system actually gets to where it is supposed to go.
- **Water deeply.** Deep, infrequent watering is much more efficient than shallow, frequent watering. What do we mean by “deep” watering? Ideally, you want to provide about an inch of water three or so times a week, as opposed to watering a little bit every day. This encourages deeper root growth, making your plants much healthier and hardier.
- **Arrange for irrigation system inspection.** Have your irrigation system inspected by a certified irrigation professional at least once every year. The professional can check to make sure that your system isn’t leaking any water as a result of damage or cracks, and can also give you tips on how to maximize your system’s performance.

MAINTAINING YOUR IRRIGATION SYSTEM

- **Inspect your system before the summer.** Fully inspect your system before hot weather rolls in and your irrigation system kicks into overdrive. To keep your yard nice and green during those summer scorchers, check all heads and make any necessary adjustments to ensure that they are working properly. If you do identify any repairs that need made, contact an irrigation specialist as soon as possible. Hiring an experienced professional to inspect your system can save you money and hassle. A lot can happen to your system over the course of the year. At minimum, a yearly inspection will keep your irrigation system running efficiently.
- **Don't forget to winterize!** Preparing your home irrigation system for winter is an important part of proper maintenance, helping protect your system from the cold, snow, and ice. The first step to winterizing is to drain all of the water out of the system. Any water left in the pipes will freeze, expand, and subsequently crack the PVC piping. Furthermore, freezing water in your irrigation system's backflow assembly can damage the internal components and potentially crack the brass body. The most effective way to winterize a system is to blow the system out with compressed air. Some systems have automatic or manual drains that can be opened instead. Don't forget — you want to complete the winterization process before temperatures fall below 30 degrees if you have any above ground pipe or an above ground backflow preventer.

WANT TO UPGRADE YOUR CURRENT IRRIGATION SYSTEM?

Even if you already have an irrigation system in place, you should consider a system upgrade. Irrigation technology has advanced significantly in the past five to ten years, meaning better nozzles, more efficient systems, and smarter control panels. An irrigation system upgrade is often substantially less expensive than a total system replacement and still allows you to reap all of the benefits that new irrigation system technology has to offer.

Ryan Lawn & Tree offers irrigation activation and maintenance services to ensure your irrigation system is working optimally all year long. Contact us at 855-216-2293 or visit www.ryanlawn.com.

