



OPTIMAL IRRIGATION SCHEDULER

How to achieve Optimal Irrigation Scheduling

Did you know that . . . over 70% of local water is used outdoors to irrigate your landscaping?

With a few simple tools, you can regulate landscape irrigation at your home -- with positive results on your water bills and plants.

You'll need:

- ✓ A sprinkler timer with a percentage adjust or water budgeting feature
(If your timer doesn't have that feature, please try our "Simple Irrigation Scheduler" brochure)
- ✓ An Optimal Irrigation Scheduler chart (provided on the back)
- ✓ 8 to 10 straight-sided containers (empty cups or cans)
- ✓ a ruler
- ✓ a phone, or access to the LVMWD web site

Step 1:

Locate the timer on your automatic irrigation system (likely somewhere on the inside wall of your garage) and determine which areas of the landscape are served by each "station" setting. (A *station* is simply a single valve and the multiple sprinkler heads it controls.) If you don't know which areas of your landscaping belong in each station, turn the stations on one by one, and watch which areas are watered, then label them accordingly. Record the areas on your Optimal Irrigation Scheduler chart.

Step 2:

Place the cans or cups at equally spaced distances across each station's landscape. Turn the station on for 15 minutes, then go back and measure the depth (in inches) of water in each container. Compute an average depth for all containers.

Step 3:

Use Table A to locate the watering times based on your computed average depths from **Step 2**. Record the average depth and associated watering time on the chart.

Repeat this 3-step process for each station, setting the timer accordingly. The times listed on Table A are based on two cycles per irrigation day, which helps to avoid runoff -- particularly on hilly terrain and clay soils. If you use a single irrigation cycle, you'll need to double the times in Table A.

If you do not want to conduct the container test, Table A also shows typical irrigation depths and watering times for specific types of sprinkler heads.

Now you know how long to water each station for. This will remain consistent throughout the year. All you need to adjust is the number of days you'll water, which is shown by month on Table B. Following this table, which is based on average weather patterns, you'll change the number of days to water each week only 4 times over the course of a year, as your plants' water needs change with the seasons.

You're now ready for the final steps, with some assistance from high technology.

Step 4:

Access the LVMWD web site. Under Conservation you'll find Weather Station Data. Or, call the LVMWD Optimal Irrigation Hotline at 818.251.2160.

For the weather station site closest to your property, identify the Irrigation Adjustment Percentage. This number shows how much more or less irrigation your plants will require over the coming week to offset the weather impacts of the previous week. This number will be updated Monday thru Friday.

Step 5:

Back at your controller, turn the dial to Budgeting. Change the value to match the Irrigation Adjustment Percentage.

With a weekly adjustment, you'll provide water to your plants according to their ongoing and changing needs.



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A Homeowners Guide to Saving Water and Money

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Optimal Irrigation Scheduler

Station	Avg. test depth (in)	Watering Time from test	Description of area being watered (e.g. front lawn)
example	3/8"	10	front lawn - plastic pop-up spray heads
example	1/8"	30	rear slope - impact rotors
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Table A: Watering Time

Average Depth (in 15 minutes, measured in inches)	3/4"	11/16"	5/8"	9/16"	1/2"	7/16"	3/8"	5/16"	1/4"	3/16"	1/8"	1/16"
Watering Time/Cycle (in minutes)	5	5	6 ¹	7	8	9	10 ²	12	15	20	30 ³	60
	¹ typical brass spray head			² typical plastic spray head				³ typical rotor head				

Table B: Watering Frequency

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Irrigation days/week	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	1
Irrigation cycles/day	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Glossary

Station -- The valve and sprinkler heads supplying water to an area of the landscape.

Watering time -- The number of minutes a station is set to operate.

Irrigation days -- The days during the week that the stations are set to operate.

Irrigation cycle -- A complete operation of all stations for their scheduled watering time.

Two 10 min. irrigation cycles per day result in 20 minutes of watering per day.

Spray head -- A sprinkler head that sprays water in a fan pattern (full or part circle).

Rotor head -- A sprinkler head that sprays a stream(s) of water and turns while it operates.

Notes

⊗ The watering times indicated in Table "A" are estimates. Your system may require slightly more or fewer minutes depending upon the way the system was designed. After implementing this schedule, observe the landscape. If the landscape looks evenly wet or dry, adjust the watering time for that station up or down by two minutes. If localized dry spots appear, check the irrigation system to identify the cause of the problem. (e.g. clogged nozzle on a sprinkler head)

⊗ Established Trees and shrubs typically require about 60% to 70% as much water as turfgrass. If your irrigation controller allows, try scheduling these areas on the controller's "Program B" and watering only two days each week in the summer months.

⊗ Make the transition to this schedule slowly. Changing overnight from a 5 day per week watering schedule to a 3 day per week watering schedule can be a shock to your landscape.