



TREEPEOPLE

june 2011 • sprinklers •

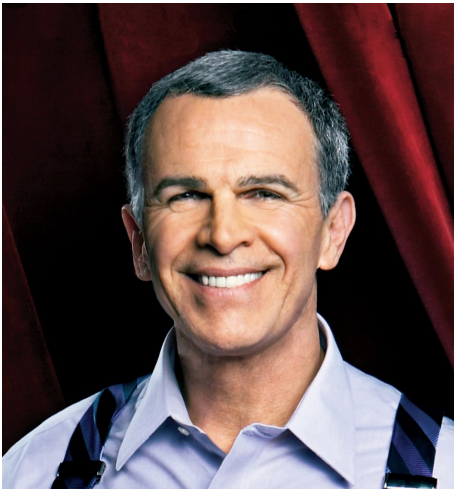


sustainable solutions

growing a greener city

out-of-the-box • plant of the month • fun workshops

Sprinklers 101



"No matter who you are or what you do, you have to have water to survive. There's just no getting around it. Every day so many gallons are wasted when it just doesn't need to be that way. Once you take a few simple steps, you realize how easy and empowering it can be to conserve our resources and being part of the solution is an amazing feeling!"

- Tony Plana, Actor

It's summertime and it's time to shape up – your sprinklers, that is. Sprinkler systems need to get in shape and running efficiently so we save water, time and money. According to the Metropolitan Water District, about 50% of California's residential water supply is used for home landscapes. Much of that never reaches what it is intended to irrigate. Overspray from sprinklers (or dry-weather runoff) hits the pavement and runs directly to the ocean. But the fix is quick and easy. So, here's the low-down to get your sprinklers ready for some fun in the sun.

1. What can I do to make my sprinklers more efficient?

Replace them. The spray heads on traditional sprinklers put out a lot of water in a short amount of time. This means they have a high application rate (see page 2). The average output of water is 1.5 to 1.7 inches per hour. They also distribute water in a fine mist that is wasted to evaporation. To determine the best irrigation schedule for you, see Sustainable Solutions, January 2011, at www.treepeople.org.

2. Are there better spray heads?

Yes, rotor heads! Rotor spray heads use a stream of water and apply it more uniformly than traditional spray heads. Typical water application values are 0.6 to 0.8 inches per hour. Rotor heads are inexpensive and easy to install. (For more savings, see our "Member Discount" and rebate information on page 2).

3. What about a drip system?

Drip is good for irrigating non-turf areas. It consists of a tube or hose with holes or emitters along it. These emitters may be spaced with a fixed distance to cover uniform, closely spaced beds, or randomly to only water certain plants. Drip applies water directly to the soil, eliminating evaporation or over-spray onto roads and sidewalks. The most common output rates for emitters range from 1/2 to 2 gallons per home.

4. What if I can't upgrade right now?

It's okay. Follow these simple steps to maximize efficiency until you're able to make the big change and rid yourself of traditional sprinklers.

- Adjust sprinkler heads to prevent spraying on the street and sidewalk.
- Make sure heads are not missing, broken, clogged or leaking.
- Make sure heads are spraying in the right direction.

Continued on page 2



TreePeople's Sustainable Solutions Program is dedicated to landscape transformation - turning yards into functional landscapes that are beautiful and sustainable. Our monthly guides and checklists detail an easy, step-by-step process, helping us all create a healthy urban forest where water is valued, air is clean, soil is healthy and trees are thriving.

Next Month: Sprinkler Systems 102

Linda's List

Linda Eremita, TreePeople's Senior ISA Certified Arborist, has the following suggestions for your June gardening fun:

Climate Appropriate Plant of the Month

California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*)

This deciduous, small native tree (20 - 25') prefers well-drained soil and full sun. It is extremely drought tolerant, and will shed its leaves in summer if the soil is too dry. With a little supplemental water it will keep its leaves until the fall. The flowers make a striking display in spring and have a beautiful scent. Large seed pods follow containing a single, shiny brown, seed. All parts are poisonous to eat.

Upcoming Workshop

August 13, 2011 - Community Sustainability Workshop. Visit www.treepeople.org



Photo from Bloospot.com

Out-of-the-Box

Rebate for Rotors

You can get up to \$3 per rotor head if you are replacing 25 or more sprinkler heads. Ranging in price from \$4 to \$10, you can practically do this project for free... or at least half price. Couple that with our "Member Discount" and in no time at all you'll end up saving money on your water bill. Where else in this economy are you going to be given money to save money?

Rotor nozzles give you precise, even watering and help eliminate dry-weather runoff. They give out a rotating stream in several directions that apply water more uniformly to your landscape, encouraging healthy plant growth. Rotors also help to better direct the water flow and therefore use 20% less water than conventional spray heads.

Check out the list of qualified nozzles on the SoCal Water\$mart website at www.socalwatersmart.com. There you'll find all you need to make your sprinkler system the envy of the neighborhood.

5. What about adjusting my application rate?

The application rate is the amount of water your sprinklers apply per hour. Getting this rate as uniform as possible will help with efficiency.

Because it hasn't rained in months, if the street is wet then something's wrong. In

Los Angeles, about 100 million gallons of dry-weather runoff, or enough water to fill the Rose Bowl, is sent straight to the ocean every single day. The time of the traditional sprinkler and all its ugly inefficiency is over. Get your irrigation system in shape for the summer. It'll not only look fabulous, but you'll be part of the solution, not the pollution.

Adjusting The Application Rate

Recommendations for irrigation are usually in inches per application or inches per week. To make sure your sprinklers are as efficient as possible... do a catch can test.

❖ Place cans on your lawn area

Place a number of straight sided cans (canned vegetables, tuna, etc.) randomly on the lawn area. The greater the number of cans, the greater the test accuracy. About 5 or 6 cans per 500 square feet of lawn area is fine.

❖ Run your sprinklers and measure

Run your sprinklers for their normal time period. Afterwards, take a ruler and measure the depth of water in each can. Add the inches or fraction of inches in each can and divide by the number of cans. If this average is more than the recommended rate of application, reduce your watering time.

Want an even easier fix but still not ready to go without grass? Try this. Lawns all over LA are often given twice as much water as they need. If your grass is "squishy" when you walk on it, reduce your water at least by half. Easy!

TreePeople Member Discount - Drip Depot

Drip Depot specializes in providing high quality drip irrigation parts and kits that make drip irrigation easy. To receive a \$10 discount on purchases of \$75 or greater, visit www.dripdepot.com and enter coupon code 7L5C8G at checkout, or call (888) 525-8874 and mention the coupon code at the beginning of your order.

To become a member go to www.treepeople.org.