

Efficient Irrigation

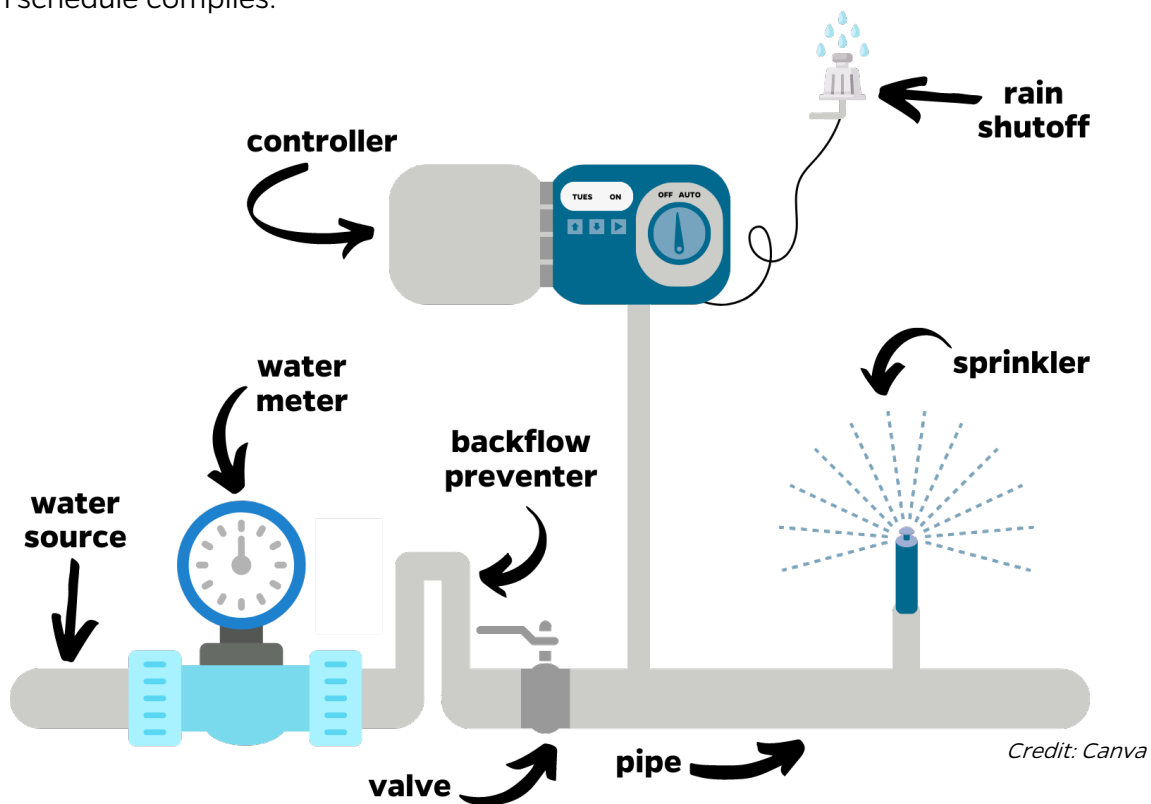
Maintaining your irrigation system might seem like a daunting task. With a little time and effort, though, your neighborhood can save thousands of gallons of water per year and slash your utility bills. We can help.

Our “Neighborhood Best Practices” program provides tips and techniques on efficient irrigation, along with preserves, wildlife, protecting our local waterways, creating community gardens, composting initiatives, and much more. Register online at tiny.cc/ufsaraext_nbp to make a difference in your neighborhood.

Check Your Settings

Follow local water restrictions

Water management districts issue restrictions to help conserve water, protect our local water resources, and to reduce strain on local utilities. Local municipalities may add regulations tailored to the specific needs of their communities. Irrigation systems using well or potable water supplies **must** follow the appropriate scheduling for their location. Visit tiny.cc/ufsaraext_restrictions to learn about your local water restrictions and ensure that your irrigation schedule complies.



Test Your Sensor

Rain shutoff devices are required by law

According to Florida Statute 373.62, all automatic irrigation systems must have a functional rain shutoff device. This device temporarily switches off your irrigation programming after significant rain events.

Test your sensor by following these steps:

1. Turn on one of your irrigation zones.
2. Use a hose or large cup of water to significantly wet your sensor.
3. If your zone does not turn off, or if your controller does not display the appropriate icon on “Auto,” you will likely need to repair or replace your sensor.

Watch our video to see these steps in action: tiny.cc/ufsaraext_testyoursensor.



Efficient Irrigation

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Evaluate Your System

Fix leaks

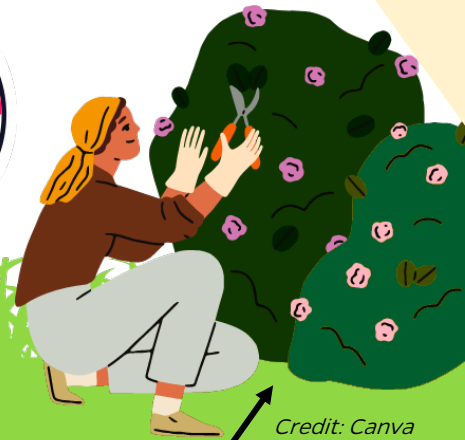
Leaks can pop up in an irrigation system and easily go unnoticed. Overwatering due to leaks can contribute to erosion, pest and disease pressure, and other landscape issues. Some leaks are difficult to detect and require special equipment. Others can be seen simply by inspecting or running the system.

Look for bubbling or pooling at the bottom of spray heads. That usually indicates an issue with the base of the head or its connection to the underground irrigation line. Broken heads can leak large amounts of water. Replace the broken component or the entire head to remedy the issue.

Other signs of a leak include unusually vibrant patches of grass or overly saturated soil.

Calibrate your run times

The University of Florida recommends applying one-half to three-quarters of an inch of water per irrigation, due to the nature of our state's sandy soils. To determine how long it takes your system to apply this, start by choosing an irrigation zone and laying out 5-10 catch cans across it. Manually run the zone's irrigation for 15 minutes. After the time is up, measure the amount of water in each can using a ruler. You can use our calibration calculator (tiny.cc/ufsaraext-calibrate) to determine your zone's new run time. Remember to repeat for all zones!



Credit: Canva

Replace clogged filters

Individual spray heads have filters that should be cleaned and replaced, if water output is strained. Property owners and managers with systems on well or reclaimed irrigation water should be aware of higher levels of particulates.

Adjust spray heads

Some spray patterns are not appropriate for certain areas of the landscape, and should be replaced to increase irrigation efficiency and reduce overspray. Some sprinklers can be easily adjusted, but others will need to be moved or replaced with the correct nozzle. You can change the degree or arc of rotors with a rotor adjustment tool.

Prune your plants

Landscape plants and grass can get in the way of spray. Make sure to prune branches that block your spray heads. Use clippers to trim 2-3 inches of grass around any blocked heads on your turf. Installing a concrete doughnut around the base of spray heads helps deter future grass growth and protects the heads from mowing damage.

Learn more in our "Neighborhood Best Practices" program

- Register here: tiny.cc/ufsaraext_nbp
 - Follow us on social media for the latest tips:
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- Find more information at our websites: sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasota and scgov.net/extension



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