

## Fall Irrigation Checklist

As the summer heat breaks and Fall is just around the corner, people are headed outside to once again enjoy the landscape. Now is the time to complete some irrigation chores to get ready for the cooler months.

**Full irrigation check** – Turn each station on from the controller to be sure that it not only turns on, but it also fully turns off. A valve that seems to run or seep may need to have its diaphragm replaced. Check for sprinkler head alignment in the turf and minimize overspray. Remember, cement won't grow no matter how much it is irrigated. Be sure that sprinklers are vertical. Heads that may have been bumped by the lawnmower over the summer could be leaning which reduces how uniformly they apply water. Clean the filter on your drip valves and flush the end of the lines.

**Plantings** – Now is a great time to get new shrubs and trees in the ground. Although they may not appear to grow much in the next few months, they are busy establishing roots that will sustain the plant next summer. When placing drip emitters for new trees, it is important to establish two “rows” around the tree. The first row should be at the edge of the root ball, the second row should be at the drip line of the canopy. This second row will allow for expansion of the root system and future growth. See example at right.

**Turn it down** – During the cool weather in the Fall and Winter months, over-watering is an all too common problem. When the temperatures cool, many people simply forget to reduce the amount they are watering both their lawn and plants. Plants and trees, especially arid adapted varieties that are watered at the same frequency as they were in the summer, may be susceptible to root and stem rot. Summer Bermuda lawns that have not been overseeded and now have a lush green appearance,

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and maybe a few mushrooms, can do with less water too.

There are some great interactive irrigation scheduling tools available on the internet. A couple new ones to try are listed below:

<http://www.amwua.org/watering.html> Click on the “Interactive Landscape Watering Guide” or

[www.etwatergnome.com](http://www.etwatergnome.com)

ETwatergnome is a great basic tool for many homeowners. Start by setting up an account (so you can access your information later), answer questions about your landscape, tell it what brand irrigation controller you are using, and the result will tell you how best to schedule irrigation for the controller you have. It even includes “You Tube” style tutorials on how to operate the controller you choose. Come back often to your account for the latest irrigation scheduling updates.



## Caring for Winter Rye Lawns

During the month of November your winter rye should be established and is thick, lush and green. In order to keep this look throughout the winter and spring months there are two items that need to be watched. These two items are watering and fertilizing.

Make sure to keep a close eye on watering your winter rye by using a probe of some sort. (soil probe, metal rod or a screw driver) One of the most common problems with yellowing rye grass is overwatering. With the cooler weather you do not need to water your rye grass daily like the summer Bermuda. You should only be watering rye around two to three times a week. Make sure to check the soil moisture to help come up with how long your run times should be.

If rain occurs then you have a great opportunity to turn your water off. The amount of rain is your factor on how long you can leave your water off. Rye grass needs fertilizer monthly during the winter months to keep it looking good. For best results, use a fertilizer containing nitrogen and phosphate.

The nitrogen will help promote plant growth and the phosphate will promote root growth. A good fertilizer is 16-20-0 (ammonia phosphate) or a general starter fertilizer for your local home store. The ratio relates to a number found on the fertilizer bag label and indicates the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium found in the fertilizer.

Rye grass is very sensitive to frost damage. This time of year there is often frost on your turf until mid-morning. Foot traffic on rye that has frost will damage the blades of grass and it may not grow back.



### MONTHLY LANDSCAPE CHECKLIST

#### Plant Renovation List (Common Type Plants)

- √ Valentine Bush
- √ Desert Honeysuckle
- √ Bat-Faced Cuphea
- √ Desert Spoon
- √ Hop Bush
- √ Cape Jasmine
- √ Red Yucca

– General Irrigation Setting (Actual times will vary depending on the precipitation rate of your system)  
Bermuda Grass Turf (if you are not overseeding)  
irrigated using typical pop-up

- √ sprinklers: 6 – 8 minutes two times per week.
- √ Drip irrigation for Plants: 20 minutes two times per week. These times are for ornamental type plants. Native or xeriscape plants will require less.
- Drip irrigation for Trees: 25 minutes one
- √ time per week. These times are for ornamental type trees. Native or xeriscape trees will require less.

Please remember that these are general recommendations and depending on your system you may need to adjust watering times up or down. Also, if we do receive rain then irrigation can be suspended until the soil dries.