

How to Check Your Sprinkler System This Summer

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Now is the time to start checking your sprinkler system for peak summer performance – it's one of the most important things you can do to keep your system operating efficiently.

Because automatic sprinkler systems often come on in the early morning hours – unobserved by their owners – leaks and other problems can go unnoticed for long periods of time – wasting water and damaging plants. By taking the time to check, repair, and adjust the sprinklers at the beginning of the watering season – and making periodic checks throughout the summer - you can be sure your plants are being watered properly, without wasting water.

Spring Checklist:

1. Close all manual drains – the sprinkler system was probably drained last fall, make sure that none of the manual drain valves have been left open.
2. Slowly open the main valve and allow the mainline piping from the main valve to the backflow prevention assembly to fill with water.
3. Have the backflow prevention assembly tested by a state certified tester. Many local water providers can supply a list of local testers, and can provide more information about the backflow program requirements.
4. Pressurize the mainline from the backflow prevention assembly to the control valves – have one of the control valves open while you do this so that air trapped in the piping can escape through the sprinkler heads as the pipes fill with water.
5. Run the entire sprinkler system, one zone at a time. As you do this, check for the following: Signs of leakage, caused by damage to the heads or piping during the winter months. Repair as needed. Spray Pattern of the sprinkler heads can be inefficient. Sometimes nozzles get clogged and need to be cleaned. Also, nozzles and sprinkler may need adjustments to reduce overspray onto walks, driveways, etc. Interference of the spray pattern can occur if plants have been moved, play equipment has been installed, or if plants have just grown too tall. Adjusting the sprinklers to accommodate the changing landscape will eliminate dry spots and puddling caused by blocked spray. Overgrown Grass can impede spray heads – make sure to keep yours trimmed. Also, check for leaning spray heads.

By following these simple guidelines, you can have a healthy lawn and garden all summer – while conserving water!