



Utility
EXPLORATION
CENTER
Where utilities meet life



How much is too much water for your yard?

Q. How do I determine if I am over watering grass?

- A. As a good rule of thumb, if you have runoff into the street you are overwatering! You can also compare your controller settings to our monthly irrigation scheduler card. Look at the total minutes per week on the card vs your controller settings. Our May class will go over setting up and using the spreadsheet I showed everyone. This is another great tool to compare your settings to what is really needed.

Q. How should I set up my irrigation to water a tree that is in the middle of my lawn?

- A. Using an emitter in line drip tubing aka Netafim to create a spiral around the trees root zone is a really easy and inexpensive way to target the trees watering needs. This could be hooked up to a dedicated irrigation valve or even a battery operated hose bib timer. Remember you are doing this to give the tree deep and infrequent water. Don't be afraid to stretch out the watering interval. As a rule of thumb I go with once a week max, but that might change depending on your specific location.

Q. Any recommendations for correcting a tree with shallow roots in my lawn?

- A. Sadly no, once the surface rooting has started it's too late. If you were interested in removing the turf you could keep the tree and still have a beautiful yard. Then you can spread mulch over the exposed roots would help to hide them. We do have a rebate for removal of grass. Roseville.ca.us/rebates

Q. When should I use the brown drip hose system?

- A. You can use it to retrofit existing landscapes by routing it around plants. Be sure to add pressure regulation if it's not already on the zone. Most sprinkler zones do not have pressure regulation already installed. It's simple to add at the irrigation valve and costs about \$20 in parts.

Q. What do you recommend for watering for outdoor ceramic pots (ie, tomatoes).

- A. Best case scenario is to have them on their own valve or hydro zone with a plant ring or a lower volume emitter like a .5-1.0 gph emitter. Make sure there is good drainage in the bottom of the container. Also use a soil moisture meter to make sure they are getting the right amount of water.

I water tomatoes once a week. On rare occasions I will increase to twice a week. The plant needs periods of stress to encourage reproduction (making blossoms = tomatoes). If the plant has daily water, it will be too happy and make little fruit. I also prefer to hand water them. This will give you time to pull weeds and find those pesky tomato horn worms.

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Q. How can I have someone come to my house to provide a consultation about how to program my irrigation system?

A. For Roseville residents, ask for a Water Wise House Call! 916-774-5761

Q. Is the water wise house call program a free service?

A. It is completely free for Roseville Residents.

Q. What about a B-Hive irrigation controller? Is that any good?

A. The B-Hive is a fantastic controller, just make sure to setup a smart watering schedule when you program it as opposed to a traditional A or B program

Q. Is there a good video to understand how to program a Rachio irrigation controller with different schedules for different zones?

A. Here is a setup video going zone by zone: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pw71x6HWlqE>
Once you have each zone detail set up, the system will start scheduling them as needed. You will not have to pick day or minutes etc. If things are trending too wet or dry, you can make modifications to the numbers used to calculate each zone. Each zone will operate like its own budget. They will not all run on the same days moving forward, unless it's called for by the calculations.

Q. I did a jar test for my soil. It was listed as Sandy Clay. Rachio doesn't have that soil type. I asked Rachio what I should select and they said to select the Silty Clay option. Do you agree with that recommendation?

A. I tend to set Rachio systems up as a clay soil to help avoid run off. Otherwise you may still have run off with the unit. This will increase the number of cycle and soaks the system calculates.

Q. What are the web links for soil testing?

A. Guide to Texture by Feel: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/soils/edu/kthru6/?cid=nrcs142p2_054311

Soil Ribbon: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/164615/determining_soil_texture_using_ribboning_technique.pdf

Jar Test: <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/soil-texture-analysis-the-jar-test/>

Q. How frequently should fruit trees be watered?

A. It really depends on many factors and it's hard to answer without knowing all the site conditions and type of irrigation system. The Placer County Master Gardeners have a lot of great information on fruit trees, you can also call them to talk through your specific conditions. http://pcmg.ucanr.org/Fruits_and_Nuts/