

# SENSIBLE SPRINKLING

USING OUR  
WATER RESOURCES  
WISELY



**st.petersburg**  
**water resources**

## WATERING RESTRICTIONS

St. Petersburg is in a water caution area as defined by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and is committed to water conservation. Water restrictions have been placed on outdoor water use to help conserve this valuable resource. Water restrictions remain in effect as dictated by St. Petersburg and the SWFWMD. For current restriction information, call the Water Wise Info Line at 892-5300 or visit [www.stpete.org/water](http://www.stpete.org/water)

## STEP BY STEP SENSOR CHECK

To ensure proper rain sensor operation, it should be checked at least once a year utilizing the following steps. These instructions are for the type of sensor that uses a cork disc, not the type that collects the rain in a cup.

1. You will need to have access to the rain sensor, which is typically located on the roofline or top of a fence post.
2. Turn on the time clock for the zone nearest to where the sensor is mounted.
3. At the rain sensor, press down and hold down the button coming out the top of the sensor. The sprinkler zone should shut off.
4. Release the button, and the zone should come back on. If it shuts off and comes back on, the sensor is operating properly.
5. If the zone does not shut off, check for wiring problems. The device may have to be repaired or replaced; the instruction manual for your specific device should be consulted for more information.



PERFORMING

## GROUPING PLANTS BY WATER NEEDS

By selecting plants that are appropriate for site conditions, and grouping them with other plants that have similar water, soil, and light requirements, you can create an attractive landscape that will require less water and maintenance. The idea of Right Plant, Right Place involves three different planting areas: oasis, drought tolerant, and natural.

- The *natural area* normally requires no supplemental watering and consists of native plants and adaptive non-natives that can survive long periods without rain. Only during the most extreme droughts would occasional watering be needed in this area.
- The *drought tolerant area* contains plants that would occasionally need water during the normal dry season (typically spring in central Florida). While drought-tolerant plants may need water during extended periods without rain, they require water much less frequently than plants in the oasis zone.
- The *oasis zone* is where thirsty plants that require frequent watering are grouped. Most turfgrasses will be part of the oasis zone.



A SENSOR CHECK

Once plants are established, water should be applied only when the plants indicate a need for water. To be most efficient with an in-ground sprinkler system, some redesigning of the zones should be considered. In addition, a "multiple program" time clock can be used to run only those zones that need to be watered.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Call the St. Petersburg Water Resources Department at 893-7261 or visit the Web site for more information.

[www.stpete.org](http://www.stpete.org)

FREE mulch is available at city brush sites. For locations, call 893-7398.

For more specific environmentally-friendly landscaping information, contact the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Program at Pinellas Extension. Call 582-2100 or visit

<http://coop.co.pinellas.fl.us/fyn/Yard.html>

Florida Native Plant Society:

[www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org)

The Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association:

[www.fnga.org](http://www.fnga.org)

For more specific sprinkler system efficiency information, contact The Florida Irrigation Society at 1-800-441-5341 or visit

[www.fisstate.org](http://www.fisstate.org)

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Southwest Florida  
Water Management District

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[www.stpete.org](http://www.stpete.org)

# seasonal care of your landscape

**fall**

(September, October, November)

**winter**

(December, January, February)

## **Irrigation Practices**

- Water based on plant need (adjusting for rainfall and current water restrictions).
- Clean and repair your sprinkler system components to ensure that the system is working properly and efficiently.
- Daylight Savings Time ends this season. Reset your timer according to current water restrictions. Replace the clock's backup battery at the same time.
- Consider using micro-irrigation in plant beds to decrease water loss due to evaporation, wind, and runoff.

## **Landscaping Practices**

- Use slow-release fertilizers to reduce growth spurts that increase plant water demands.
- Replenish organic mulch in plant beds to conserve moisture, control competitive weeds, reduce erosion, and moderate soil temperatures. A depth of two to three inches is recommended.
- Plant trees to create shade and minimize water loss from plants.

## **Irrigation Practices**

- Temperatures are cool: plant growth is reduced, minimizing the need for water.
- Timers should be set for watering once every seven to fourteen days, depending on actual temperatures, humidity, and current water restrictions.
- Perform a system check-up on your entire sprinkler system and clean, adjust, or replace malfunctioning components.
- Renovate your sprinkler system to create separate zones for turfgrass, annual flowers, trees and shrubs.

## **Landscaping Practices**

- Fallen leaves make an excellent mulch for plant beds. Mulch serves as an insulator, making roots less susceptible to cold.
- The threat of frost is a possibility. Do not risk damaging tender new growth by fertilizing at this time of the year.
- Consider enlarging mulched areas and reducing turfgrass areas to minimize water usage and maintenance requirements.



## *Did You Know?*

*Landscape irrigation can account for up to 50% of an average homeowner's water use*

## **Overwatering is**

- Promotes shallow-root
- Encourages fast growth
- Increases the growth c
- Causes fast growth th
- Flushes fertilizers, pes

# ape with sensible sprinkling

## spring

(March, April, May)

### Irrigation Practices

- Flush your micro-irrigation system and clean the filter.
- Perform a full sprinkler system check-up and clean, adjust, or replace malfunctioning components.
- Check the rain sensor on the timer to make sure it is functioning properly.
- Calibrate irrigation zones so that 1/2 to 3/4 inch of water is delivered per application.
- Daylight Savings Time begins this season. Reset your timer according to current water restrictions. Replace the clock's backup battery at the same time.

### Landscaping Practices

- Install drought-tolerant plants just before the summer rains so nature will water them.
- Add or replenish mulch to maintain a two to three inch depth.
- Use slow-release fertilizers to reduce growth spurts that increase plant water demands.

## summer

(June, July, August)

### Irrigation Practices

- During the rainy season, adjust watering frequency based on rainfall received.
- Turn off sprinklers in plant areas that do not need water during the rainy season.
- Permanently disconnect irrigation to established native and drought-tolerant plants as supplemental irrigation is typically not required.
- Check your sprinkler system for leaks and correct any problems you may find.

### Landscaping Practices

- Group plants together according to similar water needs.
- Some bedding plants, such as impatiens, wilt on hot days even though there is enough moisture in the soil. Always check soil moisture before watering.
- Mow your lawn at the highest recommended setting to encourage a deeper, more drought-tolerant root system and to shade out weeds.

## problem for the following reasons:

plants and turfgrass, which can become more vulnerable during dry periods.  
that increases pruning & mowing needs, and may make plants pest and disease prone.  
competitive weeds, such as dollar weed and nutsedge.  
can make certain plants prone to wind damage.  
leaves and debris off the lawn, through the street's stormdrains, and into area waterways, such as Tampa Bay.

# Proper care of your landscape with sensible sprinkling

## winter

(December, January, February)

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- Perform a system check-up on your entire sprinkler system and clean, adjust, or replace malfunctioning components.
- Renovate your sprinkler system to create separate zones for turfgrass, annual flowers, trees and shrubs.

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## **Overwatering is a problem for the following reasons:**

- Promotes shallow-rooted plants and turfgrass, which can become more vulnerable during dry periods.
- Encourages fast growth that increases pruning & mowing needs, and may make plants pest and disease prone.
- Increases the growth of competitive weeds, such as dollar weed and nutsedge.
- Causes fast growth that can make certain plants prone to wind damage.
- Flushes fertilizers, pesticides and debris off the lawn, through the street's stormdrains, and into area waterways, such as Tampa Bay.

*now?*  
*count for up to*  
*er's water use*