

Irrigation Tips for Solterra

These are specifically for the residents at Solterra and not the generic ones that you see in the papers, magazines or the garden centers. Schultz Industries kindly gave us these tips for Solterra. They are for normal summer weather and temperatures.

- Solterra Landscape Committee

Irrigation Setup:

The best part of the day to water your lawn is while it is cool (evening and early morning). There will be a lot less moisture lost to evaporation and the grass will be more resistant to fungal disease. Turf grass responds best when watered between the hours of 7 pm and 7 am. The goal is to give the lawn the lowest amount of water possible, while still keeping it green. During the cooler late spring and late summer/early fall, 2 nights a week should be enough irrigation. During normal 85-90 degree summer weeks, three nights a week usually keeps the grass green. The best thing you can do for an irrigation system is to make sure that all the heads are adjusted correctly, with correct nozzles and no leaks.

Pop up sprinkler heads should run for a max total of 5-8 minutes per start time or you will see a ton of runoff. The best way to irrigate the clay soils in Solterra is to setup a "cycle & soak" schedule. One start time would be at 8pm and run the sprinklers for 5-8 minutes per zone for that start time. Then set another start time 4-6 hours later and let the zones run for another 5-8 minutes each. The break in between the start times allows the irrigation water to soak in to the clay soil and saves run off.

Note: For flat areas next to sidewalks and streets, the best way to figure out how long to water is to watch the zones run and time the zone until run off (not the overspray) just starts to occur. For hill sides or sloping areas, it will take a while for the water to be visible as runoff, so it is best to start with a lower time, and if the grass looks stressed after several weeks of watering, increase the time.

Drip irrigation should always be used for plant material in landscape beds. Most drip irrigation only needs to run for 30-45 minutes a week for established plant material. Split the 45 minutes up into three watering days with 15 minutes per day. New plantings may require more water. The best way to determine if you are under watering is to just watch the plants. If they look stressed add a few minutes per day.

Rotor spray heads should be running at a minimum of 10-15 minutes per start time. They need enough run time to actually rotate enough times to give adequate coverage. The total run time for most rotor heads in a night is usually between 20-30 minutes. Rotors also benefit from a cycle soak set up. Run 2 start times per night at 10-15 minutes each.

For all irrigation control systems, make sure the rain sensor is working and is enabled so you do not water when it is raining. You should also not water during the times of high winds.

Also note, if you have a landscape company take care of your property, you should make sure they are setting up your system according to the above rules.

Every homeowner should monitor the area around their property to ensure that there is no excessive runoff from the irrigation system. If the soil is saturated or walks are flooded after the irrigation cycle runs, there is excessive runoff and the run times should be decreased.

Be aware that if there is excessive runoff, it is a violation of the *Solterra Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions, Section 4.6p*

All landscape irrigation by an Owner shall be limited in amount and frequency to that which is reasonably necessary and appropriate, and shall not be allowed to result in flooding, saturation or other adverse effects of, on or to other property.