

## Irrigation Controller Water Saving Features

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### Using repeat start times

Santa Rosa's dense clay soils have infiltration rates of approximately 0.25 inches per hour (less if there is any slope at all!). This means water soaks in to our soil very slowly.

To reduce runoff and increase depth of infiltration, water with shorter periods rather than one long irrigation. This can be achieved by using the repeat Start Time feature of your automatic controller. Allow at least one hour between start times so the water can soak in to the soil. For example, if the lawn requires 45 minutes of irrigation for a week in August, the schedule might look something like this:

Irrigate three days per week for a total of fifteen minutes each day. The fifteen minutes should be broke down into five minute runtimes with three start times (perhaps 2:00 am, 4:00 am, and 6:00 am).

### Using multiple programs

Typical irrigation controllers are equipped with three irrigation programs (A, B, C or 1, 2, 3). The purpose of these multiple programs is so the user can create three independent programs to meet the various watering needs of their landscape. The controller should be programmed so that all irrigation valves serving a similar plant type have their associated start times, runtimes, and watering days per week scheduled within one of the independent programs. The following are examples of plants with different watering needs that should be on separate irrigation programs.

- Tree Program - Established trees have roots 18-30 inches deep. Watering every other month may be sufficient. Check soil moisture and water when the top 4-6 inches of soil is dry.
- Shrub Program - Established shrubs have roots 8-18 inches deep. Watering once a week is sufficient for most shrubs, and some can survive on less frequent irrigation events. Check the soil moisture and water when the top 2-3 inches of soil is dry.
- Ground cover Program - Established ground cover plants have roots 6-18 inches deep. Watering once every two weeks may be sufficient. Check soil moisture and water when the top 2-3 inches of soil is dry.
- Turf Program - Even established turf is sensitive to seasonal and climatic changes. Turf roots can be encouraged to grow 4-6 inches deep by watering to this depth. If your turf is growing in sandy soil, you may need to water five days per week. If your turf is growing in loam soil, you may need to water 3-4 days per week. If your turf is growing in clay soil, you

may need to water 2-3 days per week. Repeat start times are especially important on clay soils because the water moves down through the soil slowly.

### **Rain shut-off device**

Installing a rain shut-off device will prevent an irrigation system from irrigating during or shortly after rainfall. This will help avoid unnecessary watering during the spring and fall which is when the rainy season and irrigation season tend to overlap.

