

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I program my Irrigation Controller?

Let's start by opening your clock with the universal key on the side by turning it forward. The Rain Dial Programming and Operation Guide will be located on either the inside of the door or the left hand side on the back of the Programming Watering Guide. If yours is lost or missing use the web site listed below. When the page opens at the bottom of the page there is a link to an operation guide.

One of the biggest things to remember is before you start programming you must move the switch on the lower portion of the clock from "Run" or "Manual" to the middle on "Set Programs". When completed, slide switch from "Set Programs" back over to "Run" or "Manual". Still having problems? Never be afraid to call the customer service dept as we maybe able to help you over the phone.

The clock that is installed by Creative Paradise Inc, is considered by most to be one of the best on the market and one of the simplest to operate as well as one of only a few with a battery back up system. The below listed website can help you with programming your clock.

http://www.irritrol.com/controllers/controllers_raindialplus.html

2. What is a drip system and why are the little black pipes sticking up around my yard?

These little pipes are called emitters and they are programmed to come on and off at certain programmed times which has been pre determined by your Irrigation timer. You may see standing water for a little while, as it seeps into the ground. If they don't appear to be working when they are supposed to, the emitter may be clogged or stopped up. For example one plant is watering and the one next to it is not. Try lightly tapping or twisting the emitter maybe even loosening or removing it to get the water to flow. Then replace or change out emitter as needed.

3. How do I know if I have a leak?

Most new lawns and turf areas will have some standing water. Your initial watering schedule is designed to keep your newly laid sod or seed constantly wet. Allowing it to dry out could slow down or even prevent it taking root.

First, turn your clock off and see if that stops the water flow. It should unless you have a stuck valve. If it does not, follow directions below for turning off vacuum breaker.

When you have a leak in a line it will only flow during its designated watering time but when the valve turns off it will stop the water flow. In most cases when you have a leak you will see a small spray or volcano looking eruption in the vicinity of the suspected leak. It may be hard to see sometimes but if you look you can usually find it. Go to you front hose bib connected to it but off to the side is your vacuum breaker there are two knobs that can be turned a ¼ of a turn, turn one or both a ¼ turn. Then please call our customer service department and we will address the problem as soon as we can. You should manually water your trees, plants and lawn while waiting for your repair.

4. Why does my Ocotillo look dead?

They get a little stressed out from standing in the sun all day. Your Ocotillo is not green because it is protecting its tender inner system from the sun. Ocotillos can take up to three years to bloom from the time of transplant. They also lose their leaves in the winter or go dormant. Please be patient it will be beautiful.

5. Why are my plants dying?

Trees and shrubs are living breathing organisms that respond to their unique environments. During high temperatures, it is natural for a plant to wilt in response to the heat. Usually, a wilting plant will perk up once the heat has diminished.

If a plant appears stressed, check the surrounding soil for moisture or dampness. If you notice a plant turning brown in the heat turn up you water just a little bit and see if it continues to get worse or levels out, before adding more. During low temperatures plants can get frost damage and portions may brown and die. This is nature's way of pruning; don't cut away these burnt sections until very early spring when you will generally get tons of new growth. In the mean time they act as a barrier from continued frost damage. Several varieties of plants in Arizona routinely go dormant in the winter. In most situations you should, when temperatures drop down to the low 30's or below, cover your plants with a medium thickness breathable cloth material. Most major nurseries also carry different types of frost cloths.

6. Why is my grass turning brown?

You need to make sure you are watering your new lawn enough, about three times a day for the first ten or so days. The soil beneath the sod should remain extremely wet for that time period. Avoid pet or foot traffic across or around the new lawn area during this time period. Other reasons for browning include pet urine stains, scalping after mowing which can be fixed by more frequent mowing, or grass growing too tall and blocking spray of sprinkler heads. During extreme temperatures, your lawn may need more water. Over watering after a new lawn has established can cause rot and problem areas. See Water guide listed below under new lawn watering instructions for more long term watering schedule and other information.

7. Why is my masonry cracking? (I.e. patios, walls, stone work, BBQ's and fireplaces)

Exterior masonry items are subject to extreme temperature changes from heat and cold, normal settling and even earth movement. This will cause the expansion and contraction of such items and should be expected. All major deficiencies will be addressed during the warranty period.

8. How often should I check my Irrigation system?

At least every 30 days! Your grass sprinklers will come out of adjustment, emitters will blow off lines causing leaks, some emitters will clog over time through calcium build up by city water, and the list goes on.... Manually turn on each valve from your controller and physically walk your yard and check every plant, tree, & sod area. Clean and/or change out emitters as needed on a regular bases. Don't forget to turn your valves back off when complete. And replace the 9 volt battery every 6 months in your clock.

9. Why does my granite appear to be wet in certain spots, is that a leak?

Some types of granite are more porous than others and will retain water from a watering earlier in the day often leaving a wet appearance or water stain. In most cases nothing to worry about.

The landscape basics: what to expect after installation.

New Lawn Watering instruction

New lawn care: all turf is a form of Bermuda, therefore, your lawn will go dormant (turn brown) in the cooler months unless it has been over seeded with winter rye grass.

- New turf will require water 3 times per day, 3-10 minutes each interval for the first 2 weeks. **(During this time, do not walk on the turf area).**
- After 2 weeks, reduce the watering to twice per day for 5-10 minutes per watering. Observe your lawn to determine whether to adjust times by 1-2 min either way to prevent dry out of certain areas or flooding of others. Note: every zone may have different watering times from each other based on layout or yard drainage.
- After 2 additional weeks your lawn can be turned back to a more normal watering schedule. Seek out city watering guides or municipality for your area, or consult nurseries in your area. Most lawn problems can be avoided with a good watering schedule and regular fertilization and care.

Note: Over watering your lawn can cause damage not only to your lawn but surrounding items. And under watering can cause brown spots.

See area under frequently asked questions for clock reprogramming.

What to expect with my new Lawn.

New turf will be uneven. Turf areas will level out over time with weekly mowing. If you desire a quicker leveling, you may fix seams and low spots with a mixture of 50% sand and 50% fine garden mulch. To avoid a lumpy, uneven grass area, please do not walk on your grass for the first 3 weeks it will cause excessive bumps in your yard and that is not a warranty item.

Mowing should start after the first 3-4 weeks. Make sure your sod is dry, and that you're mowing at a higher setting for the first 90 days. In summer, fertilize with ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) every 30 days and gypsum every 45 days.

Over seeding: To over seed your lawn for winter, use perennial rye seed. It will be available at most home improvement stores or your local nursery. This should take place between the beginning of October and early November. Time frame can shift depending on current temperatures consult nursery professional for proper time and proper installation and watering. If temperatures are still above 95 degrees it is too hot to over seed. In the winter (for winter rye) fertilize with ammonia nitrate (34-0-0) every 30 days and gypsum every 45 days. No fertilizer is required in the winter if you choose not to over seed your lawn.

There is no such thing as an evergreen lawn in Arizona with temperatures that range from 20 degrees to 120 degrees. Contrary to what some believe, it is not necessary to over seed Bermuda grass in winter. If temperatures are mild, Bermuda may retain some green color most of the winter and it usually stays quite green through Thanksgiving. Many people skip over seeding to save water and enjoy a vacation from mowing. Bermuda will recover faster in spring and remain healthier if it is not over seeded with ryegrass in winter. It should green up on its own sometime in February or March, depending on spring weather.

Regular mowing promotes good healthy growth; grass should never be allowed to block spray of the sprinkler heads that will cause brown spotting from lack of adequate spray, and too long between mowing will cause you to scalp your lawn when it is mowed (Very Brown).

Note: newly installed lawns should **not** be detached the first year.

When do I change the settings for water of trees and plants?

Set irrigation to water more frequently as temperatures rise. (The amount of water supplied stays the same; it is the frequency of watering that change with the seasons). Be sure to water around the outer reaches of a plant's canopy, where feeder roots can absorb it. Water should soak 1 foot deep for shallow-rooted plants such as cacti, Succulents, annuals, and perennials; 2 feet deep for shrubs; and 3 feet deep for trees. Use a soil probe to determine how far water penetrates. The probe will easily move through moist soil but stop at dry hard soil.

During periods of extreme heat or wind, increase length of water time. Turn off watering system at the clock during wet periods.

Note: Don't forget to turn clock switch back to "run" after any reprogramming of timer.

Watering Schedule: first check periodically for plant and tree stress from too little or too much water.

Signs of Under Watering

- Soil is dry.
- Older leaves turn yellow or brown and drop off.
- Leaves are wilted.
- Leaves are curled.

Signs of Over Watering

- Soil is constantly damp.
- Leaves turn a lighter shade of green or turn yellow.
- Young Shoots are wilted.
- Leaves are green yet brittle.
- Algae and mushrooms are growing.

Plants can use three to five times as much water during the hot summer months as they do during the winter. Adjust your watering schedule with the seasons and when there are more significant changes in the weather.

What to do when mixing new plants into a mature yard

To prevent wilting, young plants should be watered more often than older plants. After they become more established (about one year) allow a slight drought between watering. The plants will adapt to the stress and become more drought-tolerant.

All cacti and some succulents will **not** be on the drip system and should be hand watered 2-3 times per month. Over time this may be a little less often but should never be forgotten about. Cacti should be allowed good drainage and never over watered. Cacti do not require fertilization.

Tips for Fertilization and watering

Citrus Trees: Do not fertilize this tree for the first year. After one year, apply ammonium sulfate three to four times per year (Feb., May, and August). Apply in accordance with the manufacturer recommendation. These trees should be deep watered and then allowed to dry out before being watered again. (Once per week is a general guide) Consult nursery professional for best type of citrus fertilizer for your needs.

Queen Palms: Queen Palms, unlike Mexican fan palms, require special care. Queen palms also need to be watered more often than other palms. You'll need to fertilize your Queen palm with 1/4 cup of ammonium sulfate once per month, Epsom salt 1/4 cup once every 90 days, palm tree food every 90 days. All palms need some type fertilization care. See a nursery professional for proper fertilizers.

Desert Trees: Desert trees are native to this area and do not require any fertilization. Your drip emitters will be close to the root ball of the tree when first installed, and should be pulled away as the tree matures to approximately one half the diameter of the canopy. This will help prevent the tree from blowing over and assist in developing a healthier root system. Once the tree is established you should eliminate the drip system to the tree and water deeply with the hose two (2) times per month.

Non Desert Trees: Non desert trees such as citrus, ficus, elms, and palms (just to name a few) prefer additional water. These trees will require more fertilizers and generally do better when planted as a young tree (15 gal. or smaller) vs. a mature specimen, which will have a hard time with acclimation.

Shrub Care: Desert shrubs require no fertilization. Non desert shrubs require fertilization twice per year with ammonium sulfate or a general fertilizer (16-8-4), once in the spring and once in the fall.

Cactus: Cacti need good drainage away from the roots and do not require any fertilizer. Water 2-3 times per month.

Ocotillos: This type of plant requires small amounts of water and takes up to three years to produce any signs of life. Water your ocotillo during dry periods with a garden hose to maintain a healthy look.

For good long and short term care of your landscape you should take the time to see to your trees' and plants' needs. Even low maintenance yards need some extra care a few times per year. A good fertilization and watering schedule will produce an absolutely beautiful yard. Consult nurseries, the internet or your local library or book store for more information.

When and how to prune my trees

Newly planted and young trees should not be pruned in the first year in most cases. You should allow the tree time to get a thicker trunk and well rooted before pruning.

When it is time to prune, May to early June is a good time for native trees (non-native trees should be pruned in January during their winter dormancy). Summer is their active growth period, so they will quickly put out new foliage. It is not necessary, however, to prune just to prune, or because your neighbor has pulled out their loppers. Have a clear goal for what actually needs to be done. Things to look for when pruning are braches that hang down or come out past normal or average canopy growth, thinning branches in too thick of a canopy, branches damaged due too stress, diseases, weak or dead branches and or weather related damage.

A tree possesses a remarkable ability to heal pruning cuts. Specialized tissue grows over the cut and seals it, preventing pests and diseases from entering. Called "meristematic" tissue, it is located in the notch where branches meet the trunk (or where branches and smaller side branches meet). In order for the tree to successfully close a

pruning wound, it is important to make a good cut that doesn't damage this tissue. Here's how to make good cuts

Make a cut in a straight line between the "branch bark ridge" and the "branch collar." The branch bark ridge is a raised furrow of bark on top of the branch where it meets the trunk. The branch collar is a similar raised furrow on the underside of the branch where it joins the trunk. The specialized healing (or meristematic) tissue is located in the collar.

Don't make "flush" cuts deeper into the trunk, or "stub" cuts that leave some of the branch behind, as the tree is unable to seal them.

Removing Heavy Limbs

Your goal is to prevent the weight of the limb from ripping bark down the length of the trunk when the cut is made and the limb drops. Not only does this create unsightly damage to your tree, it also opens a gash for pests and diseases. Supporting the weight of a heavy limb while it is being cut off is very difficult. To make the process manageable, remove the limb in portions, as explained below.

Step one: Make a slight undercut one-quarter of the way through the branch, 6 to 12 inches from where the final cut will be. This undercut "stops" the bark from tearing when the bulk of the limb is removed.

Step two: Saw completely through the branch a few inches beyond the first undercut. This removes the weight.

Step three: make the final cut through the branch bark ridge and collar.

Repeat as necessary.

Dormancy schedule and Frost protection

Dormant Schedule: Listed below is a *partial listing* of plants which go into a dormant state during part of the year. This means the plant looks as though it is dying, no flowers, no leaves, brown in color, etc...

Winter Dormant Plants/Trees: Lantana • Chinese Elm • Red bird of paradise • Mesquite • Ruellia Britannia • Palo Brea • Ruellia Katie Lysiloma • Desert willow • Ash varieties

Summer Dormant Plants/Trees: Mexican primrose • Desert Marigold • Verbena • Salvia Greggii • Brittle bush • Pentsemon • Blackfoot Daisy

Frost Protection: The following plants should be covered when temperatures drop below freezing. DO NOT use plastic to cover plants; use dry bed sheets, burlap, frost guard fabric... Even after a severe frost most things do recover in the spring or summer. Frost damage is not covered under warranty.

Citrus • Ficus • Agaves • Dwarf Oleander • Arizona Yellow Bells • Hibiscus • Dalbergia Sissoo • Cape Honeysuckle • Lantanas • Bougainvillea • Orange Jubilee • Exposed Tropical Bird of Paradise • Pigmy Date Palms • Plum Bago • Sago Palms • Natal Plum

Put Styrofoam on growth tips of Mexican Fence Post, Senita and other small specimens of Organ Pipe type Cactus. All similar or like kind.

Frost Damage should not initially be cut back it will help with protecting the rest of the plant until spring. Frosted plants should not be removed until mid spring they may just be dormant and most will recover very quickly come spring, sometimes even better than before. Once springs temperatures warm up, trim back portions of plant that will not recover.

Things to know

Granite: Rocks are a natural product and will vary in size and color from delivery to delivery. The majority of landscapes in Arizona utilize decomposed granite as a top dressing. Decomposed granite comes in many sizes and colors. The chart below will tell you what to expect in your granite areas.

- Minus or decomposed rock contains 60% to 80% crushed granite sand.
- Screened rock contains approximately 40% to 60% crushed granite sand.
- Sized rock contains approximately 20% crushed granite sand.

Granite will become thin or decompose slowly over time. It is very common to regranite or put on a thin, fresh coat every 5 to 7 or more years. This time varies depending on type of granite.

Animals: All efforts should be taken to keep Foreign or Domestic Animals away from eating or urinating or trampling on any part of plants or irrigation material causing damage.

Termite Barrier: Often termite barriers are disturbed when installing landscape. This is often unavoidable and the customer should always have their home retreated after installation by original company who holds your warranty whether termite barrier was disturbed or not. This should be expected and is not a warranty problem by Creative Paradise Inc. It should be considered in your landscape budget while in the planning process.

Yellowing of Leaves or premature leaf drop due to pest: This is generally a sign of over watering. Other possible problems are infestation of some sort or vitamin deficiency. Or maybe just a normal cycle of the tree or plant. Often plants such as lantana and other plants may in late summer early fall, suffer from White Fly infestation. Some type of yuccas and cacti are prone to burrowing bugs that eat the item from the inside out killing it the process. Possible solutions can be as simple as cutting back the watering or treating with appropriate pesticide. A good insecticidal soap is effective against many harmful insects. These can also be found at any home improvement store. Pesticides should always be used with care and only when deemed necessary. But always act at first sign of problems rather than waiting. Consult your local nursery for best possible solutions.

Note: Good watering and fertilization schedule and removing debris and dead or dying limbs or branches is always good preventive medicine.

Drainage: Customers are always discouraged from blocking their drainage down the side yard, but we are here to work for you and will build your yard the way you want, please take our advice on how to best make your yard drain in the best possible way. Pads and side walks can still be added and still drain. Even on a good unobstructed drainage area it can still take up to 72hrs to drain if blocked or even slower.

Weed Control: Pre-emergent twice per year is the best weed control agent in granite areas. Plastic overlays are no longer used. Some weed growth will occur even after treatment and should be manually removed.

For lawns some types of fertilizers have weed control for lawns in them but the best form of control is combination of pulling them buy hand along with a good fertilizer with weed control.

Nut grass can be very problematic and may take help from a professional weed control company. It can take several treatments and long term care but better addressed

sooner than later. Being allowed to get out of control and overtake your yard could be a very costly mistake.

Flagstone: Flagstone is a natural stone product from the earth. It will always vary in color, thickness and density. It may even contain fossils from plants and other organisms these will appear as black splotches within the stone. The flagstone will even have layers or chip off from time to time. Hairline cracks should be expected within the flagstone mortar joints. Flagstone will have a natural unevenness to it, being a natural stone product.

Where to look for watering schedules: There are several areas to look but be sure it is specific to your area. The following is a good example of things to look under for information.

<http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/waterguide/index.shtml>