



Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences
Clay County Extension Service

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SEASONAL QUESTIONS FROM THE LANDSCAPE FOR EXCLUSIVE USE BY NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR APRIL 2009

By Raymond H. Zerba Jr., Extension Agent IV, Clay County

Q. *I keep hearing different things about how much to water my St. Augustinegrass lawn. What is the right amount?*

R. Actually that varies with each system and depends on its design and how much pressure it operates on. Generally, the University of Florida advises you to stick your finger into the soil and water whenever it feels dry but no more than twice a week in the summer months. You should do this the day before you expect your timer to come on and if the soil is damp (from previous rain or because of its nature) flip the timer clock to manual so it does not come on at its scheduled time the next day. Then when that day passes you can flip it back to auto. Doing this does not mess up any of your clock programming.

One other issue is how long you should leave each zone on. The University of Florida recommends you irrigate no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch at each zone, each time it comes on or if the soil is of a deep draining nature, up to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of water for each zone. Since each person's system is different, the only way you can tell how long to leave that zone on to deliver $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of water is to put a bucket out there and do a test run. Most systems deliver a half inch in about 30 minutes but some can take longer.

Be aware that we are currently under St. Johns River Water Management District restrictions that do not allow for watering more than an hour at a time or more than $\frac{3}{4}$ inches at a time per zone (whichever comes first) per day. You may not water between 10:00 AM

and 4:00 PM any day. The University recommends (to minimize disease on grass) to irrigate early morning only (3:00 AM until 8:00 AM). Under new guidelines from the District, if your address is even numbered (example 32, 106, 1248, etc.) you may only water on Thursday and Sunday. If your home address is odd numbered (example 33, 105, 1247, etc.) you may only water Wednesday and Saturday. No one may water Monday. Businesses, Parks, Churches, and Public Buildings can water on Tuesdays and Friday only. People with private wells, using city water, or drawing from rivers and lakes are under these restrictions.

No one with recycled water available can use water from wells to irrigate. Those using recycled water, hand-watering, using low volume sprinklers, or drawing from retention ponds have exemptions. To learn more about this new rule go online to “sjrwmd.com: watering restrictions” where there’s a fact sheet you can download.

Want someone to answer a specific plant question for you? Go online to <http://clay.ifas.ufl.edu> and under the heading “Horticulture” (left hand side of page) left click on “Ask a Master Gardener” and a reply will be sent plus a hyperlink to the appropriate University of Florida Fact Sheets. To speak to someone by phone, call 269-6355 or 284-6355.