SPOSATO IRRIGATION

Spring 2021

Irrigation Information

Irrigation practices should provide for the correct distribution of water, allow good water infiltration through the soil and keep the soil moist enough to support plant growth without irrigation for a reasonable time.

Even distribution of irrigation water throughout a zone and the entire system is critical. If within each zone there are different heads by different manufactures water can be distributed at different gallons per minute (GPM) causing either over or under watering within the zone. Heads should be checked regularly for a correct rain curtain or spray pattern as well as nozzle size.

Soil type and sun exposure probably creates most of the issues faced with automatic irrigation systems. A well-drained soil type is most desired for proper turf care. Compacted clay soil creates difficulty due to poor soil absorption. Sandy soil creates issues because of no water retention and more frequent watering schedules are required.

Shady turf needs less water than grass in full sun. Soil in shady areas tend to be more saturated so care is to be taken when scheduling the irrigation system.

Frequent watering of a short duration will usually keep the top of the soil layer near saturation most of the time. This type of watering schedule promotes shallow roots and weak turf which is likely to cause damage from traffic, disease and insects. Unless the turf sits atop sand, it is preferred to let the turf rest a day or two between watering.

Turf Height

The higher the grass, the more extensive the root system. The more extensive the root system, the more drought tolerant and disease resistant. Turf cut short, anything under 3”, causes most of the energy to be spent on growing new blades and not of growing roots.

Thatch management and core aeration.

Thatch is a layer of organic material that sits on top of the soil. If the thatch is allowed to get too thick, it may inhibit water, air and fertilizer to reach the roots zone and well as hide insects and disease. Core aeration is the mechanical removal of soil cores from the turf. Soils that are compacted greatly benefit from this process. Non compacted soils also benefit as it promotes root growth and allows air and water movement below the soil line.

Drainage

It is crucial to the care of good turf to have proper drainage. That includes the right amount of slope to move surface (rain) water to where it should go, sump pump and downspout discharge as well.

Watering window

It's best to water early in the morning, between 4am and 9am. This is usually when the wind is the quietest and before too much water is lost to evaporation. New sod or seed will require several short periods of water to establish the root system. Once the roots are established, cut back on the watering schedule.

General Watering Guidelines

These are not hard and fast rules, get to know your yard and your system and adjust accordingly

April (if needed)	2 days per week
May	2 to 3 days per week
June to Mid July	3 to 4 days per week
Mid July thru August	4 to 7 days per week
September	3 to 4 days per week
October (if needed)	2 days per week

Your conditions, soil, exposure and quality of turf may need more or less.

The Seasonal Settings feature on your irrigation controller can also help in reducing run times during the spring and fall seasons.

Rotor Zones

Rotor type heads for turf usually have a 20 to 30 minute run times depending on conditions. If there is standing water on the turf after a cycle, reduce run times for that zone.

Spray Zones

Spray heads are used for turf usually to cover small areas or in landscape beds. Spray heads should never run more than 15 mins, usually 8, 10, or 12 minute cycles are more than sufficient. If a longer run time is needed, split the number of desired minutes in two and schedule another run time later in the cycle, day or week to achieve the desired results. Again, if there is standing water on the turf after a cycle, reduce run times for that zone.

Drip Zones

Drip zones can usually run 10 to 20 minutes depending on age of plant material, exposure and soil conditions. The more established the Plants are the less water required.

Flowering annuals, however, typically require water daily.