



How To Create A Watering Schedule

Hi, I'm Kevin McCaleb. Let's do a quick review of what we've learned so far. You can follow along on your worksheet and your sketch as we go. In the first video, we learned how to calculate how much water was needed to put on irrigated areas of our yard to equal one inch. In the second video, we calculated how much water our sprinklers were putting out each minute. We converted that number from cubic feet to gallons of water. We were able, then, to divide the gallons per minute, which is the output, into the amount of water each area needed, the input. And the result was how many minutes the sprinklers needed to run to put down one inch of water on our yard.

The third video showed us how to make some adjustments to compensate for irregularities in our sprinkler systems or landscaping. Hopefully, you have all made those adjustments by now. In this video, we are going to build a schedule based upon the information we got from the previous videos. So break out your sketch, the worksheet, your pencil, and a calculator, and let's get started.

A schedule is made up of three things: when to water, which means what time or times of the day to start watering; how long to water, which is how many minutes or hours in the watering cycle; number 3 is how often to water: how many times per day, days per week, month, etc. that you want to water. Included in those three things are weather conditions, which will vary throughout the season. The water needs of the plant material, the depth of the roots, the hardiness, the drought tolerance, and also the characteristics of the area being watered. The type of soil, its exposure, the slope, etc. Our first step will be to refer back to our sketch. On it should be the total weekly need from video one, and also the number of the valves that operate the sprinklers in an area. You may see that more than one valve operates sprinklers in a particular area. Both valves' output, the gallons per minute, will be added together to calculate that area's water needs.

On this worksheet, identify zone 1. As you work across the sheet, you'll see a space for the programs: A, B, C, or D. This is just a way to keep separate weather we're watering turf or watering shrubs on the different programs. I like to keep them separate. You'll also see a place for the type. T is for turf, S is for shrubs and trees, M is for mixed. This is just a way, again, of identifying on which program these particular types of landscaping are on.

The next thing you'll see are the days to water: Monday through Sunday. This is a judgment call on your part. But I prefer that turf be watered no more than three times per week, and shrubs and trees no more than once or twice per week. The next space is the minutes per day. We'll figure that out on this worksheet, as minutes per day is going to be the run time divided by the days of the week to water. We get the run time from video 2, where we figured out the total amount of minutes that we needed to run our system in order to give it that one inch of water. We're going to take that number and divide it by the number of days we're going to water, and that will give us how many minutes for each watering cycle we need to run our system. So as an example, let's take for instance zone 1. Let's say that zone 1 is a turf, and our total run times per week is 60 minutes. We're going to put zone 1 on program A. We're going to write down a type that says T for turf. We're going to water it Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. We know that we have a total run time of 60 minutes. We're going to divide that 60 minutes by 3, which will tell us that we need to run zone one 20 minutes every day that we water, which would be Monday,

Wednesday, and Friday.

From video 1 to video 4, we have now gone through everything that you need to get you basically to where you're managing your water on your property. Are they perfect? No. Are they 100% accurate? No. You still need to pay attention to see that there's no runoff, to watch that your sprinklers are staying on your yard, to see to it that the programs are running the appropriate amount of water. This is a good starting point. Tweaking it up, down, left, right, is all on you, and it comes from your observation. Your eyes are the best help. So once you get this started, if you go out and you see water running into the street, then you know that on that particular zone, too much water is going down at one time and you may have to adjust your cycles. While these tools will help you better manage your water more efficiently, there's nothing that can replace your own two eyes. If you look around and you see dry spots, take a look. Is the whole zone dry, or just one spot? Maybe it's nothing more than a soil issue and you just need to water that a little bit. So you can use these tools to help you manage your water more efficiently now and into the future.

If you'd like more information on using water efficiently, check out the other videos on ConserveH2O.org.