

Spring Irrigation Tune-up

Now that spring is here and the rainy season is over (we think), your plants will eventually need to be irrigated. The following check list is geared for a drip & micro irrigation system. The following steps can be used as a guide for a spring sprinkler tune-up.

Before you turn on your irrigation system follow these quick 10 steps.

Make sure that you have adjusted the irrigation controller timer to reflect daylight saving time.

Flush the main line to clear any accumulated dirt or sediment in the line.

Clean the filter (if you have one).

Turn on each valve and check for any leaks in the main irrigation lines and repair as necessary.

Check all emitters to be sure they are operating.

Replace emitters that are not performing satisfactorily.

Take a look at the area being irrigated. Have the plants matured over the last year making it necessary to add additional emitters?

Remember that grouping plants that have similar irrigation needs (hydrozoning) is the best plan for your garden irrigation design. Do any rearranging of plant material that can be done safely at this time of the year for those plants that are out of place.

Over-watering with drip systems is common. Check the soil moisture at the rooting depth of plants that day after watering. Adjust the irrigation time and delivery method accordingly.

Remember that plant water requirements change during the season. Make a note on the calendar to recheck in June and again in September.

Perform spot checks throughout the season to assess system performance. Regularly check soil moisture around plants. The failure of a drip system is often evident only when the plant is failing.

Now you are set for another successful year of gardening!

For more gardening information go to: cecolusa.ucanr.edu