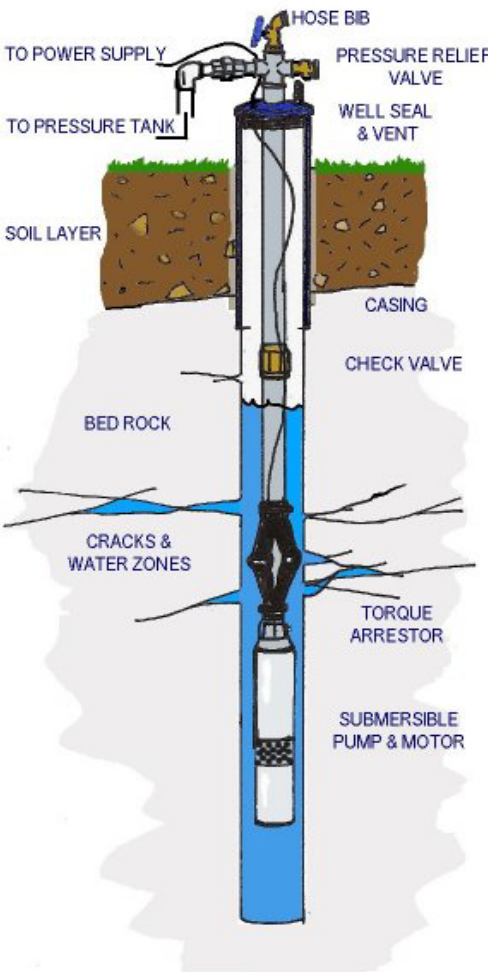


Irrigation Programmed Run Times

We have all heard the cry from our local water suppliers about how the irrigation should be operated for less frequent intervals with longer run times. We have all seen water running down the street, which can began as soon as 5 minutes into the watering program. The big question at this point from the client is "who is programming the irrigation controllers?"

There are environmental conditions and equipment limitations that cause this condition. See, Spring 2001 Quarterly newsletter on Microenvironments and xxx 200x Quarterly newsletter on Thatching and Winter 2004 Quarterly newsletter on Pop up sprinklers. This newsletter will focus on soil make up and plant needs.



The soil make is a common source of run off. Operating sprinklers for periods longer than 10 minutes fewer times a week simply doesn't work in these ariadx and clay conditions. In order for water to move in the earth rock and porous materials (compost) are needed in correct ratios. Too little rock and the soil is dense and you have run off, to much rock and the water drains away rapidly. Porous soils are commonly found in heavily wooded areas un-impacted by development such as forest.

Our properties are for the most part located where the elevations have been changed with heavy equipment and any original vegetation has been stripped away so that the infastructure and buildings could be erected. So the idea of operating irrigation systems for extended periods of time less frequently wont achieve the desired results in a uniform manner. Property owners will not willing accept that their property cannot look as lush as the neighbors because of the greater good.

These prescribed water schedules include 20- 40 minute watering cycles 2-3 times a week. Which work out to 40-120 minutes per week. Currently used turf programs (largest user of water) at the peak of summer use 2 watering per night at 7 minute watering times, 6 times a week works out to 84 minutes per week. The result is; reduced weed infestation because lawns are not stressed, happier owners, smaller need for weed control applications, cooler conditions during hot spells from green turf, and no turf restoration cost in the fall.

Water saving should be sought through correct programming, using irrigation controllers that provide the greatest flexibility in programming, proper turf management (thatching/aeration), replacing faulty equipment (sprinklers/valves).



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