



LANDSCAPING TIPS brought to you by the Arizona Landscape Contractors' Association, the Sustainable Landscape Management (SLM) and the Arizona Certified Landscape Professional (ACLP) programs www.ALCA.org.

It is August and no one needs to tell you we are deep in monsoon season - it is obvious by the humidity that makes us a bit more uncomfortable and the sudden and dramatic storms. But the higher humidity that we experience as discomfort can actually benefit our landscapes, if it is taken into account rather than ignored. Higher humidity, coupled with the additional moisture added in the form of rain, require that we adjust our irrigation schedules to maximize the benefits of this extra water, reduce harm to the plants, and avoid wasting our precious water resources.

- When relative humidity rises, plants transpire less, reducing their irrigation needs.
- Irrigation schedules that do not account for extra humidity and rainfall may lead to overwatering.
- Overwatering can lead to plant stress, root rot, and fungal diseases.
- Stressed plants are more susceptible to insect damage.
- Often, we find that irrigation schedules are only adjusted in the spring and fall. But a qualified landscape contractor will optimize your irrigation system by regularly making adjustments based on more than just the calendar.
- They will take into account the needs of your specific landscape in the context of your local weather conditions, and make the necessary adjustments to your irrigation schedule.
- Many landscape contractors are introducing clients to smart technology in the form of irrigation controllers (timers) that make automatic adjustments to your irrigation schedule based on local conditions via moisture, temperature, humidity and wind sensors and/or locally-collected weather data.
- Smart controllers can also enable you or your landscape contractor to make off-site (remote) adjustments to your irrigation schedule if needed.
- An experienced landscape contractor will check the irrigation system for leaks and malfunctions as a part of regularly scheduled landscape maintenance, as well as conduct an evaluation of your irrigation system to confirm operational efficiency at least twice per year.



An efficient irrigation system is not something that should be installed and then ignored until problems emerge. A skilled landscape contractor or irrigation professional will always be looking for ways to maximize plant health, reduce water waste and to anticipate irrigation challenges before they become problems.