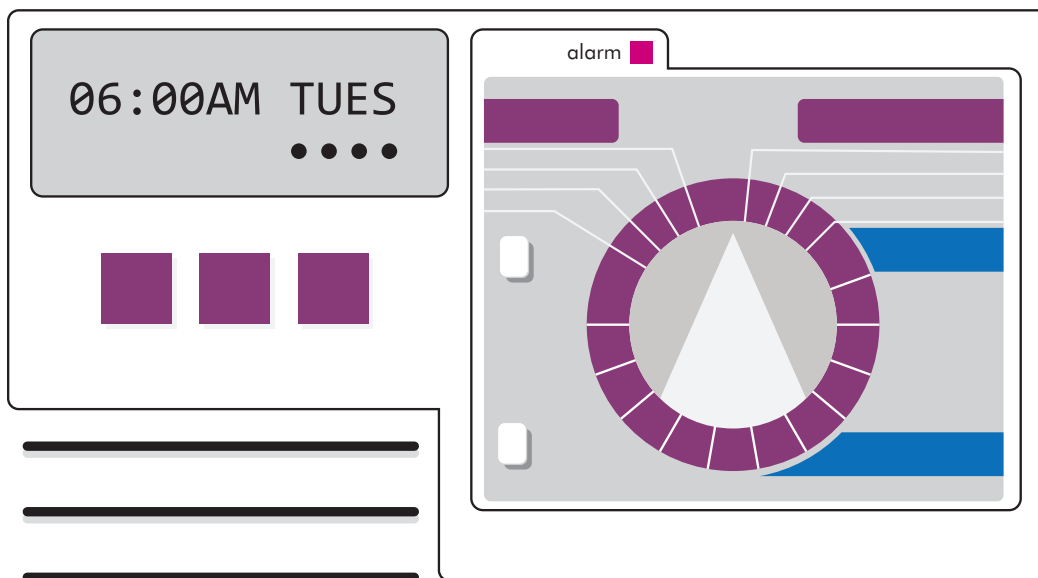




Florida Automated Weather Network **FACTSHEET**

TIME CLOCK



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The Time Clock

FAWN FACTS: Time clocks

The irrigation controller, or time clock, is the brains of your irrigation system. It controls when and how long your system operates, and understanding it is essential to proper care of your lawn. Improper operation of your time clock can waste water and harm your lawn – too much water can cause an increase in disease, weeds, and pests.

Your time clock needs to be “told” 3 things for proper operation:

1. Which days to water. First, check with your local water management district for watering restrictions; there may be prescribed days of the week you can water. Water is lost to the atmosphere through evapotranspiration (ET). In the spring and summer, ET is greater, so your lawn will typically need water every 3-5 days during these months. In the fall and winter, however, ET is less, so your lawn will typically need water every 10-14 days during these months. In general, however, water only as needed – *when about 30% of your grass shows wilt.*
2. What time to begin. Statewide water restrictions prohibit watering between 10am and 4pm. However some municipalities may have more limited restrictions. Water during the cool, calm morning hours to minimize evaporation and disruption of sprinkler pattern.
3. How long to run each zone. Most Florida soils hold about $\frac{3}{4}$ " of water in the top 8 to 9 inches. You need to determine how long your system should run to apply this amount. You can do this by placing small, open, straight-sided cans in each zone and noting the time it takes the cans to accumulate $\frac{3}{4}$ " of water. You can then set each zone to water for this length of time.

Most irrigation controllers can be adjusted to water for a percentage of a set time. For example, your controller may be set to normally water for 30 minutes. During the summer, however, when rain is more frequent, the controller may be set to water for a fraction of that time since less water is needed.

Some controllers have the capacity to run multiple programs. You may be using program “A” to water your established landscape. If you decide to plant new plants that need more frequent watering, program “B” can be set to water these plants more frequently.

Visit http://fawn.ifas.ufl.edu/tools/urban_irrigation/ for more information on this topic.

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