

P.O. Box 7220, Tempe, Arizona 85281  
 Web site address: [www.fourpeakslandscape.com](http://www.fourpeakslandscape.com)  
 E-mail address: [info@fourpeakslandscape.com](mailto:info@fourpeakslandscape.com)  
 Phone number: (480) 967-0376

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## July - Smart Irrigation Month

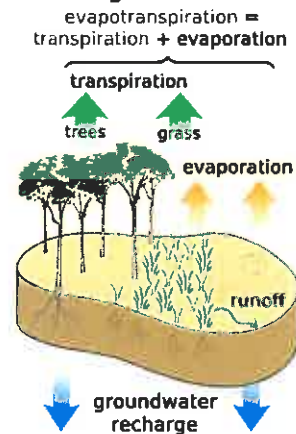
By Jim Trog, CIA, CIC



The EPA's Water Sense Program dedicates July of each year officially as Smart Irrigation Month. Historically the highest water use month of the year, it is a good time to take a close look at how you use water around your home. Local statistics indicate on average approximately 70% of all water used by a single residence is used outside the home. This is a great time to evaluate your irrigation system and see if you can save some water and a few dollars this summer.

**Evapotranspiration** - The goal of supplemental irrigation is to provide just enough water as your plant material requires. The challenge is knowing just how much water that really is. Agricultural operations for years have used a reference called Evapotranspiration (ET). This is a measurement of how much water is lost by your plants or lawn through transpiration and from the soil through evaporation over a given period of time. If you have ever noticed the "lawn watering guide" published in the local newspaper, they are using this ET reference to indicate how much water is needed by your lawn if you haven't watered over the last few days. You can use this information if you know how much water your sprinklers apply over a short period of time. Using same sized containers (cups, cat food cans, Tupperware containers...); lay them out in a grid pattern in your lawn. Run the sprinklers for ten minutes and then measure and record how much water is in each container. Add the numbers together and divide by the number of containers used and you will get the average collected in each

container. You now know your sprinkler's application rate and can use it along with the watering guide to calculate how long to run your sprinklers to replace just the water lost through ET.

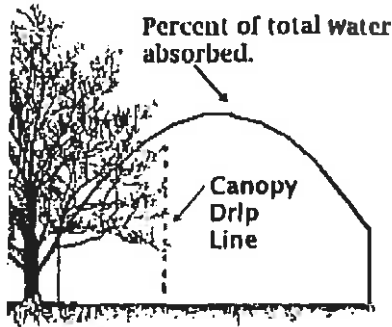


**Smart Irrigation Equipment** - Many advancements have been made in irrigation equipment over the last few years. From the smallest drip emitter to sprinkler nozzles to irrigation controllers, manufacturers have strived to provide components to make irrigation more efficient. Consider upgrading to the new technology when it comes time to replace old-worn equipment. New "smart controllers" can be programmed with information about your irrigation system and then utilize ET data to automatically adjust irrigation programming based on current weather trends. Moisture sensors have can be added on to many existing controllers and use the level of moisture, real time, to tell your system to water or not. Almost "set it and forget it!"

**Tips** - Where you irrigate may be more important as

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July – Smart Irrigation Month, continued how much you irrigate. Water needs to be applied from the drip line and further as trees and shrubs mature.



Extend/move your drip emitters to accommodate the growing root system of your plants. Reduce run off and puddling by using a cycle and soak method of irrigating. This can be done easily by shortening the overall length of the run cycle and adding multiple start times. As an example, if your sprinklers need to run for 20 minutes, it may be better to run 4 separate cycles of 5 minutes each instead of putting down all 20 minutes at once.

More information can be found at [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense) or your local water conservation office.

## “Monsoons” are your trees ready??

### Routine Tree Care Now or Storm Damage Later

By Gary McCunn, Certified Arborist WE-7255A



The Big Question: does it make sense to trim now or can I wait and see how the trees do in the monsoons? Storm damage can be very costly. From emergency calls, structural damage and replacement cost of lost trees. Even if you think you don't have the money in your budget to trim all the trees that may need it, at least have a Certified Arborist come out and inspect your trees, before the monsoon winds get here. A skilled Arborist can check for things like decayed or split branches, root disease, exceptionally dense canopies and trees with poor structure. In many cases



these are hazards that an untrained eye will not see and correcting them can be a dangerous job. Based on the outcome of the inspection, an Arborist will recommend the appropriate corrective action to take.

**Do Not** use an Arborist who **proposes topping trees** to fix a problem. Topping leads to problems later in a tree's life and is prohibited by industry standards.

Remember trees are a valuable landscape asset, so you may want to reconsider when you think, let's just wait and see how they do on their own. You may see it might be better to spend a little money on them now so they are still here for the future.

***Let an Arborist help you keep this from happening on one of your properties!!***

## General Landscape Care for July

Summer in Arizona, with high temperatures and monsoon storms... a typical forecast for July. Time to make sure your properties' waterways & drainages are clear of debris, ready for potential heavy rains. Identify any potential issues and rectify, or propose repairs prior to the rains. Trees are susceptible to winds and heavy rains, if not maintained properly. Check tree stakes and wiring, avoid girdling around trunks and branches, crown thin and shape as needed, to prevent tree loss or damage. Make sure emergency contact information and emergency storm clean up procedures are in place, prior to storm events.

July is a perfect time to prune fan palms, prior to their seed dispersal. Prune & shape select plants as needed, however over pruned, heat sensitive plants

may not recover. Irrigation during July should be done in the early evening hours through the early morning hours. This will allow more water penetration into the soil, getting to the roots prior to evaporation. Multiple start times may be required, to achieve the necessary deep soaking and avoid excessive water run off / loss. However, know the capabilities and limitations of your irrigation systems. Some systems may not have the capability for multiple start times. Don't forget to fertilize your annuals, prior to jumping in the pool.



## MONTHLY LANDSCAPE CHECKLIST

### Plant Renovation List (Common Type Plants)

- √ Bougainvillea – If necessary to help control growth
- √ Bat-Faced Cuphea
- √ Creosote
- √ Purple Sage

– General Irrigation Setting (Actual times will vary depending on the precipitation rate of your system)

- √ Bermuda Grass Turf irrigated using typical pop-up sprinklers: 12 – 15 minutes three times per week.
- √ Drip irrigation for Plants: 20 – 30 minutes two times per week. These times are for ornamental type plants. Native or xeriscape plants will require less.
- √ Drip irrigation for Trees: 40 – 50 minutes one

time per week. These times are for ornamental type trees. Native or xeriscape trees will require less.

Please remember that these are general recommendations and depending on your system you may need to adjust watering times up or down. Also, if we do receive rain then irrigation can be suspended until the soil dries.

Turf Fertilization for the Bermuda Grass should be completed once every six to eight weeks on average using fertilizer containing at least 16–20% Nitrogen. Apply following the label and make sure to water in for a few minutes after application.