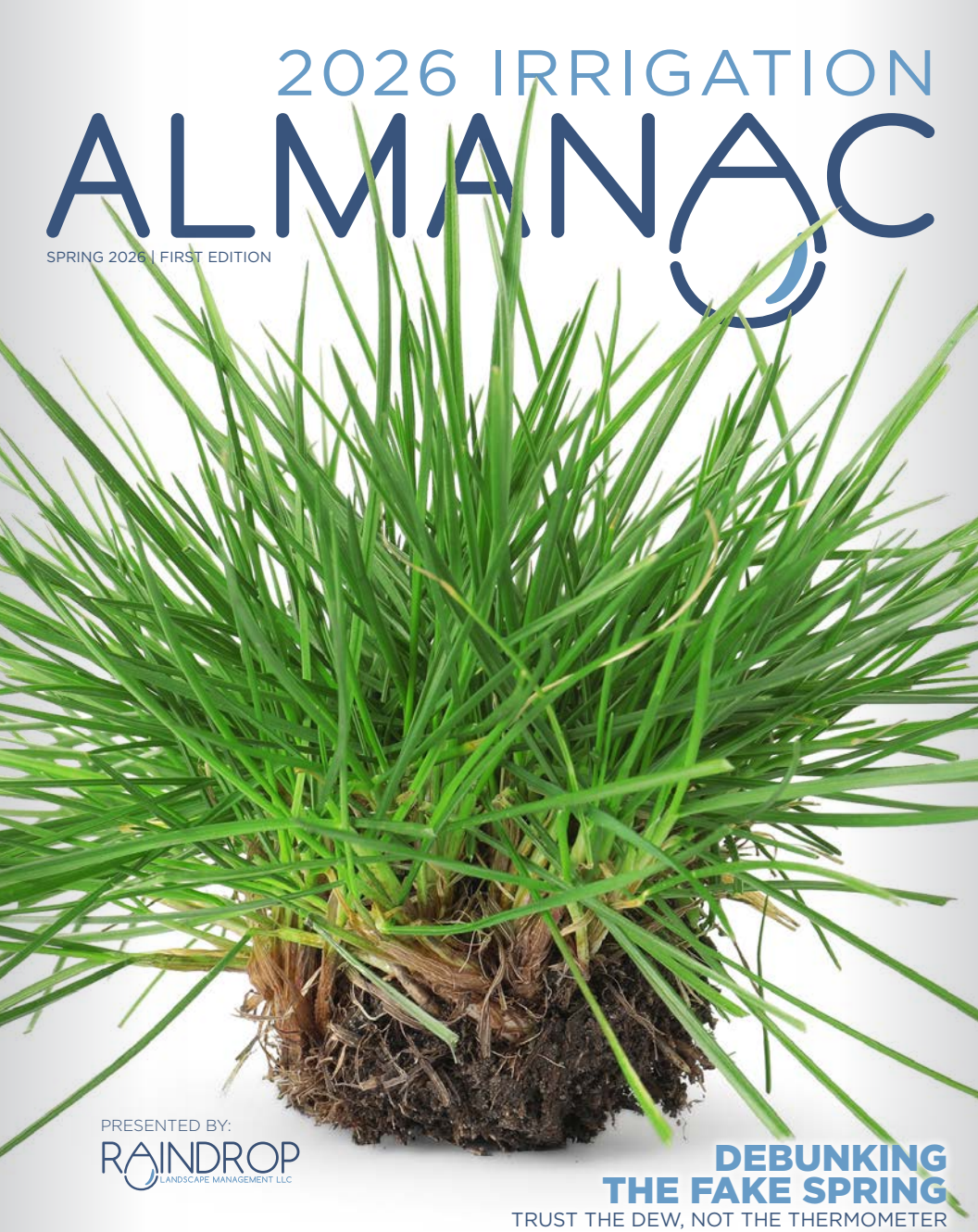
2026 IRRIGATION ALMANAC

SPRING 2026 | FIRST EDITION



PRESENTED BY:

RAINDROP LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT LLC

DEBUNKING THE FAKE SPRING

TRUST THE DEW, NOT THE THERMOMETER

THE DAILY WATERING MYTH

WHY DAILY WATERING KILLS SUMMER GRASS

THE AIR POWERED FIX

WATERLESS WINTER SERVICE

THE EAST TENNESSEE GUIDE TO NATURE'S "HIDDEN RAIN" & STRATEGIC WATERING

THE SCIENCE OF THE DEW POINT

HOW THE TENNESSEE VALLEY'S "HIDDEN RAIN" NATURALLY HYDRATES YOUR LAWN

WHAT IS THE DEW POINT?

Simply put, the dew point is the temperature at which the air can no longer hold its water vapor, forcing that moisture to condense into liquid. When the air temperature drops to the dew point at night, dew forms on the grass blades.

NATURE'S "FREE" WATERING

Throughout the spring (March through May), our East Tennessee nights almost always drop down to the dew point.

THE RESULT

Every morning, your lawn is covered in a heavy, natural soaking.

THE BENEFIT

This moisture doesn't just sit on the blades; it beads up and runs down into the thatch and the top layer of soil. This "morning drink" is usually enough to keep the roots hydrated even through a warm 80°F afternoon.

THE "SPRING HEAT" MYTH

In the spring, your lawn has 12 to 14 hours of cool, dewy recovery time for every few hours of afternoon heat.

BUILDING "TOUGH" ROOTS

Starting irrigation too early can cause laziness in your grass; letting it rely on heavy morning dew encourages roots to dig deeper.

THE RAIN SENSOR MYSTERY



HUNTER®
RAIN-CLIK®
RAIN SENSOR

IS YOUR RAIN SENSOR TRICKING YOU?

How East Tennessee Humidity Can "Trick" Your System

Many modern systems include a rain sensor. In East Tennessee, our high humidity and heavy morning dew can sometimes "trick" these sensors into thinking it rained. If your system doesn't run on a particularly foggy or dewy morning, it's often because your sensor is doing its job - recognizing that Nature has already provided the moisture your lawn needs!

*Raindrop can work on ANY brand of rain sensor, but we recommend the Hunter® RAIN-CLIK®

DON'T RUSH THE STARTUP!

STANDARD WINDOW IS MID APRIL TO JUNE 1ST

DON'T WORRY IF YOU AREN'T SCHEDULED UNTIL MAY!
This extra time helps your grass build the deep, resilient root system it needs to survive the Tennessee summer.

*Raindrop Startups are performed Mid April through June 30th . We target June 1st for "Best Results" to guarantee your system is dialed in before the peak of summer.

DON'T LET "THE SPRING OF DECEPTION" FOOL YOU!

NATURE IS ALREADY DOING THE WORK.

KNOWING YOUR GRASS & HOW THE DEW POINT HELPS

BECAUSE EAST TENNESSEE SITS IN A "TRANSITION ZONE," WE GROW BOTH COOL-SEASON AND WARM-SEASON GRASSES. WHILE OUR IRRIGATION METHODS WORK FOR ALL OF THEM, HERE IS HOW EACH SPECIFIC GRASS TYPE BENEFITS:

GREEN IN JANUARY?
TALL FESCUE

BROWN IN JANUARY?
BERMUDA & ZOYSIA

FINE BLADED & SOFT?
KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS

TALL FESCUE (COOL-SEASON)

The most common lawn in East TN. It stays green year-round but struggles in the summer.

NATURE OF THE GRASS: Fescue naturally struggles in Tennessee summers. It may go dormant (turn brown) to protect itself; over-watering during this time often leads to "Brown Patch" fungus rather than greener grass.

HOW THE DEW POINT HELPS: Fescue is a "cool-season" grass, meaning it loves the 50°F nights of spring. The heavy morning dew provides the moisture it needs to store energy before the summer heat hits.

WHY "DEEP & INFREQUENT" IS VITAL: Fescue is highly prone to Brown Patch fungus. Watering at 4:00 AM (to match the natural dew) and then letting the blades dry completely by mid-morning is the #1 way to keep Fescue alive without using heavy chemicals.

BERMUDA & ZOYSIA (WARM-SEASON)

These go dormant (turn brown) in the winter and thrive in the peak heat of July and August.

NATURE OF THE GRASS: These grasses love the heat! By relying on spring dew instead of early irrigation, you allow the soil to warm up naturally, helping these grasses wake up from dormancy faster.

HOW THE DEW POINT HELPS: During the hot summer months, these grasses use the high humidity and nightly dew to "recharge." Because they are drought-tolerant, the natural dew often sustains them between deep waterings.

WHY "DEEP & INFREQUENT" IS VITAL: Bermuda and Zoysia spread via "runners." By watering deeply and then letting the soil dry out, you encourage those runners to dig deep and spread thick, creating a lawn that feels like a lush carpet.

KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS (COOL-SEASON)

A soft, fine-bladed grass often found in high-end premium lawn mixes.

NATURE OF THE GRASS: Bluegrass has a shallower root system compared to Tall Fescue. Because it can't reach as deep into the soil, it is the first to show signs of stress when the afternoon sun hits.

HOW THE DEW POINT HELPS: Because Bluegrass is sensitive to heat, the 14 hours of "cool recovery" provided by the nightly dew is its lifeline. It uses that morning moisture to keep its root zone cool before the clay begins to bake in the sun.

WHY "DEEP & INFREQUENT" IS VITAL: Our "Cycle and Soak" method is non-negotiable for Bluegrass. Because the roots are shallow, you must ensure the water doesn't just run off the clay - it needs that extra "soak" time to penetrate the top few inches of soil where the Bluegrass roots live.



OUR STRATEGY FOR ALL GRASS TYPES

REGARDLESS OF THE TYPE OF GRASS YOU HAVE,
THE EAST TENNESSEE CLAY IS THE COMMON DENOMINATOR.

Fescue needs the water to stay cool.
Bermuda needs the water to grow fast.
ALL OF THEM NEED THE WATER TO GET PAST THE CLAY AND INTO THE ROOTS.

PRO-TIP FOR NEW ARRIVALS

If you moved here from the North, you're used to Fescue and Bluegrass. If you moved from the South, you're used to Bermuda. In East Tennessee, we have both! Our "Deep and Infrequent" morning watering schedule is the only way to ensure both types thrive in our unique humidity.

GROW DEEP ROOTS IN TENNESSEE CLAY

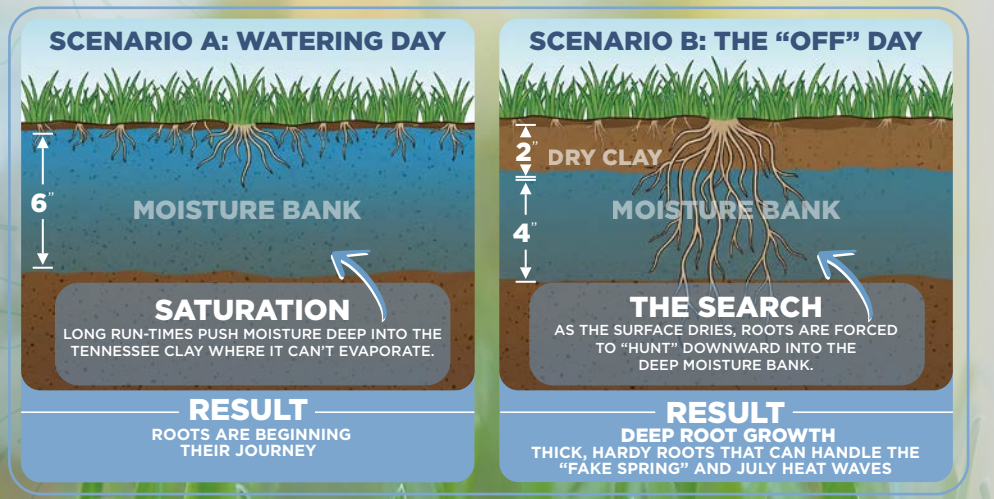
A SUCCESSFUL LAWN STARTS BENEATH THE SURFACE. AT RAINDROP, WE TRAIN YOUR GRASS TO BE A "ROOT HUNTER" RATHER THAN "LAZY" GRASS CAUSED BY DAILY, SHALLOW WATERING. BY UNDERSTANDING THE DEW POINT AND USING DEEP SOAK SETTINGS, YOU CAN FORCE ROOTS TO HUNT FOR DEEP MOISTURE.

WHY THE "OFF-DAY" IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DAY OF THE WEEK

"Lazy" grass is the #1 cause of summer failure. When you water every day, roots stay shallow because they never have to "hunt" for a drink. Our goal is to train your lawn to survive the Tennessee heat by building a massive, underground moisture bank.

STRATEGIC SCHEDULING: EFFICIENCY MEETS COMPLIANCE

Our technicians are trained to program your system for a 3-day-per-week schedule as the gold standard for Tennessee clay. This isn't just a biological preference for deeper roots; it also keeps you in perfect alignment with many local water companies that have three-day watering restrictions. By mastering the deep soak method, our team ensures your lawn receives the full volume of water it needs within these required windows, preventing runoff and maximizing every drop. We don't just set a timer; we calibrate a professional strategy that respects both the law and the land.



THE RAINDROP STANDARD: TRAINED FOR RESULTS

At Raindrop, we don't just "turn on the water". Our technicians are specifically trained to be stewards of your lawn's health, focusing on the critical relationship between watering cycles and deep root development.

Every team member is educated on the specific needs of East Tennessee's Transition Zone grasses and the challenges of our heavy clay soil. When we arrive at your property, we aren't just checking for leaks; we are calibrating your timer for the deep soak method and adjusting zones to ensure every drop reaches the deep moisture bank.

By investing in our team's expertise, we ensure that your system is programmed for maximum resilience - giving you peace of mind that your lawn is protected, even if the unexpected happens.



THE RAINDROP FAIL-SAFE

DEEP ROOTS ARE YOUR LAWN'S INSURANCE POLICY

If your system ever has a mechanical malfunction, an established "Root Hunter" lawn won't brown out immediately.

Those deep roots will sustain your grass,

KEEPING IT GREEN AND HEALTHY UNTIL A RAINDROP TECHNICIAN CAN ARRIVE FOR MAINTENANCE.

EXPERT EYES: Every Raindrop technician is trained to calibrate your system for the "Root Hunter" strategy, ensuring your landscape is built to last.

DREW REED
SENIOR TECHNICIAN

SPRING STARTUP

SCHEDULING TIP
BOOK EARLY!
HIGH DEMAND
STARTS 6-8 WEEKS
BEFORE SPRING

MID APRIL - JUNE 1ST

MANY OF OUR CLIENTS MOVING FROM DIFFERENT STATES ARE SURPRISED BY OUR STARTUP SCHEDULE. IN EAST TENNESSEE, A WARM AFTERNOON IN THE SPRING ISN'T THE SAME AS ONE IN JULY.



THE "SPRING HEAT" MYTH

In the spring, your lawn has 12 to 14 hours of cool, dewy recovery time for every few hours of afternoon heat.

BUILDING "TOUGH" ROOTS

Starting irrigation too early can cause laziness in your grass; letting it rely on heavy morning dew encourages roots to dig deeper.

THE THREE DAY RULE

AS WE MOVE INTO THE STARTUP WINDOW, WE RECOMMEND A 3-DAYS-PER-WEEK SCHEDULE (FOR EXAMPLE: MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY).

WHY 3 DAYS? This provides enough moisture to supplement the tapering spring rains without keeping the soil "soggy." It allows the soil to breathe on the "off" days, which is vital for root health.

LUBRICATION: Even in a rainy spring, run your system for a full cycle at least once a week. This keeps seals lubricated and prevents valves from sticking before the summer heat hits.

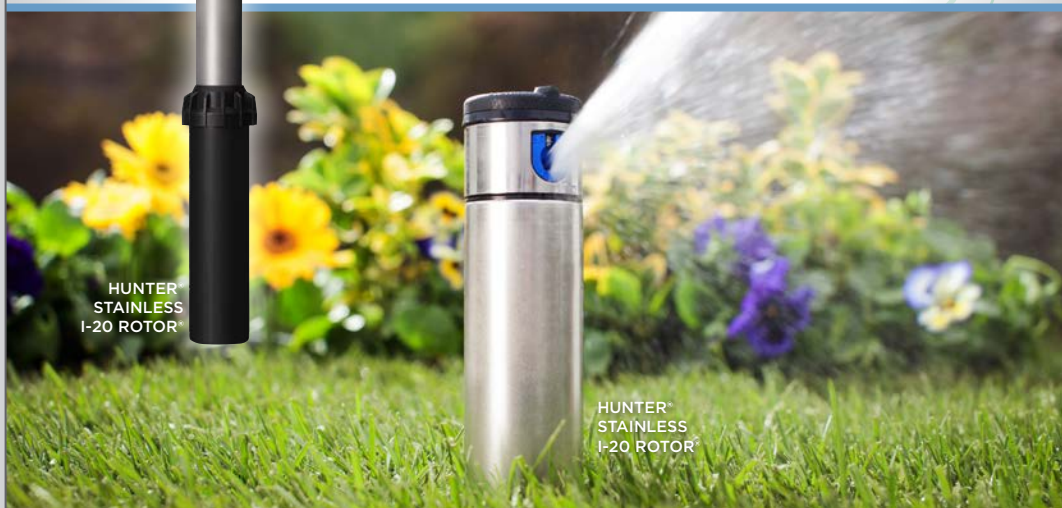
THE FLOWERBED STRATEGY: NEW VS. ESTABLISHED

IF YOUR SYSTEM INCLUDES FLOWERBEDS OR "DRIP" ZONES, THEY REQUIRE A DIFFERENT MINDSET THAN YOUR GRASS - ESPECIALLY DEPENDING ON THE AGE OF THE PLANTS:

NEWLY PLANTED FLOWERS & SHRUBS: These are in their most vulnerable state. Their roots are still confined to the shape of the pot they came in and haven't pushed out into our local clay yet. These need consistent, daily monitoring.

ESTABLISHED LANDSCAPES: If your shrubs and perennials have been in the ground for 2+ years, they are much tougher. Their roots have found the "cool" layers of the soil. These can follow a schedule similar to your lawn, only needing supplemental water when the top inch of mulch feels bone-dry.

RAINDROP CAN WORK ON ANY BRAND STANDARD HEAD, BUT FOR ROTORS, WE RECOMMEND THE HUNTER® STAINLESS I-20®



SUMMER STRATEGY

SCHEDULING TIP
CALL/TEXT ASAP!
WE ARE IN OUR HIGHEST DEMAND FOR HEAVY MAINTENANCE

JUNE - AUGUST

ONCE WE HIT JUNE, THE RULES CHANGE. THE GOAL IS TO KEEP THE ROOTS HYDRATED WITHOUT KEEPING THE LEAF BLADES WET FOR SO LONG THAT THEY ROT IN OUR HIGH SOUTHERN HUMIDITY.

THE EARLY BIRD WINDOW 4:00AM - 8:00AM

THE GOAL: You want the grass to be wet for the shortest amount of time possible.

WHY IT WORKS: By watering at 4:00 AM, you add to the natural dew. Once the sun rises, the wind and heat dry the blades quickly.

THE DANGER: Never water at night (8:00 PM – Midnight). Wet grass + 75°F nights = Fungus.

SUMMER STRATEGY

ADD MINUTES, NOT DAYS: When the Tennessee heat hits 90°F, your lawn needs deeper drinks, not more frequent ones.

KEEP THE RHYTHM: Stick to your 3-day-per-week schedule to prevent Brown Patch fungus.

ADJUST THE VOLUME: Use your timer's "Seasonal Adjust" feature to increase run times across all zones simultaneously.

ADVANCED SETUP: If your timer lacks a "Seasonal Adjustment" feature, you can set a second "program" to run after our recommended 4:00 AM – 8:00 AM window. Many modern timers include a built-in "Cycle & Soak" feature. Consult your owner's manual to see if your model supports this automated watering strategy.

NEED HELP? Timer programming can be tricky. Call or text 865-922-8480 to have a tech dial in your summer settings for you!

HUNTER® HYDRAWISE® IRRIGATION TIMER



RAINDROP CAN WORK ON ANY BRAND OF TIMER, BUT WE RECOMMEND THE HUNTER® PRO-C® OR WIFI HYDRAWISE® TIMERS

FLOWERBEDS IN THE HEAT: MULCH IS YOUR FRIEND

WHILE YOUR GRASS NEEDS "DEEP AND INFREQUENT" WATERING, YOUR FLOWERS AND SHRUBS MAY NEED A BIT MORE ATTENTION IN THE 90-DEGREE HEAT:

THE MOISTURE BUFFER: Ensure you have a 2–3 inch layer of mulch in your beds. This acts as a lid, preventing the sun from baking the water right out of the clay.

WILT MANAGEMENT: Some plants (like Hydrangeas) may "flag" or wilt in the heat of the afternoon even if the soil is wet. This is a self-defense mechanism. If they perk up after the sun goes down, they are fine. If they are still wilted the next morning, it's time to increase your drip zone run times.



THE FESCUE FACTOR

Fescue naturally struggles in July and may go dormant to protect itself. **Over-watering at this stage won't make it greener; it will only lead to fungus.**

DORMANCY VS. DEATH:
Your Fescue isn't dying; it's defending itself. Turning brown is a survival tactic used by cool-season grass to endure extreme heat.

SHADE VS. SUN CALIBRATION

A zone in the full afternoon sun needs significantly more water than a zone under a large Oak tree. We calibrate your timer to account for these "micro-climates." If one area of your lawn is scheduled differently than another, it is a strategic choice to account for the amount of "self-shading" your grass receives.

DON'T MOW IN THE HEAT

AVOID MOWING DURING THE HOTTEST PART OF THE DAY.
Cutting grass when it is heat-stressed causes rapid moisture loss and "bruises" the blades, leading to browning and root damage that even the best irrigation system can't fix.

AUTUMN TRANSITION & WINTERIZATION

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

AS THE DAYS SHORTEN, YOUR LAWN'S WATER NEEDS DROP. HOWEVER, AUTUMN IN EAST TENNESSEE BRINGS TWO UNIQUE CHALLENGES THAT REQUIRE A BIT OF EXTRA COORDINATION.

AERATION COORDINATION: PLAN AHEAD!

September and October are prime months for aeration and over-seeding. This is a "mini-peak" for irrigation, and it is vital to coordinate your schedule:

WATERING NEW SEED: Your new seed will need frequent, light watering to germinate. **Talk to your aeration company** to find out exactly how long they want you to water once the seed is down.



THE SCHEDULE RUSH: Because everyone is aerating at once, our schedule fills up very quickly. **You must coordinate with your aeration company and Raindrop way ahead of mid-October.** Ensure your aeration and your final watering cycles are planned out before your winterization appointment.

SCHEDULING TIP

BOOK EARLY!
HIGH DEMAND
STARTS 6-8 WEEKS
BEFORE MID OCTOBER

THE WINTERIZATION WINDOW (MID-OCTOBER – THANKSGIVING)

Our standard window for winterizing systems runs from mid-October through Thanksgiving. This timing is designed to protect your system from the deep ground-freezes of winter.

HANDLING A "COLD SNAP": It is common to have one or two frosty nights before your scheduled winterization.

THE UNDERGROUND PIPES: Do not be alarmed! During the winterization window (up to Thanksgiving), we are **not** concerned about your underground pipes freezing. In East Tennessee, the ground typically does not freeze long or hard enough this early in the season to damage buried lines.

THE EXPOSED BACKFLOW: What we **are** worried about are the exposed brass backflow units. These sit above ground and are the first things to freeze.

THE COLD SNAP EMERGENCY PLAN



FEBCO 825Y BACKFLOW PREVENTER

IF A HARD FREEZE IS FORECAST BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

THE CONTROLLER:
Turn your system to the "OFF" position.

THE BLANKET & BAG TRICK:
Wrap your outdoor brass backflow unit in a thick old towel or blanket.

SEAL IT:
Pull a large plastic bag over the towel and tape it down at the bottom. The bag keeps the towel dry - a wet towel will freeze into a block of ice, making the problem worse!

PLANTS:
If you have sensitive, new fall flowers, you can throw a light sheet over them for that night to keep the frost from "burning" the tender new growth.

WINTER ADVANTAGE

DECEMBER - FEBRUARY

JUST BECAUSE YOUR IRRIGATION SYSTEM IS TURNED OFF DOESN'T MEAN WORK HAS TO STOP! WINTER IS ACTUALLY THE PRIME TIME FOR MAINTENANCE AND LARGE-SCALE PLANNING.

WINTER MAINTENANCE: CLEAR AIR, NO FREEZES

If your winterization invoice noted maintenance needs (sprinkler head relocation, PVC repairs, etc.), **we can often complete these repairs in the winter.*** How? We use compressed air instead of water to test the lines and check for leaks. This allows us to fix your system while it is dormant, ensuring your "Spring Startup" is seamless and stress-free.

SCHEDULING TIP

BEAT THE RUSH!
WE ARE IN HIGH DEMAND FOR LARGE PROJECTS DURING THIS TIME

PRIME PLANNING FOR BIG PROJECTS

If you are planning a backyard transformation for the next season, the time to talk to us is now. Big projects like pools, hardscapes, fence installs, tree removal, or new construction often require significant alterations to your irrigation lines.

COORDINATE EARLY: We need to be in the loop at the same time you are talking to your other contractors.

THE WINTER HEAD-START: By altering and preparing your irrigation system during the winter, we can ensure your system is ready to be started up and perfectly aligned with your new landscape the moment the spring dew arrives.



*WINTER REPAIRS, ZERO FREEZE RISK:

WE USE COMPRESSED AIR, NOT WATER, TO GET YOUR SYSTEM SPRING-READY WHILE IT'S STILL DORMANT

RAINDROP
LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT LLC

BUILT ON SERVICE

OFFICE 865-922-8480 | **MAIN** 865-604-7246

www.raindroplandscape.com