

Irrigation Tune-Up for Irrigation Season

Drip Irrigation

Micro-irrigation systems can deliver water and nutrients in precise amounts and at controlled frequencies directly to the plant's root zone. The benefits of drip irrigation are as follows:

- ◆ greater water application uniformity
- ◆ improved water use efficiency
- ◆ minimized deep percolation and runoff
- ◆ enhanced weed control
- ◆ reduced bacteria, fungi, disease, and other pests that require a moist environment
- ◆ efficient delivery of fertilizer (fertigation) and other chemicals (chemigation) through the irrigation system
- ◆ ability to irrigate land too steep for irrigation by other means

The following tips will help you maximize your irrigation system for efficiency. Prior to beginning to irrigate your plants, consider this checklist for a successful growing season:

1. Irrigation canal water can be more turbid than well water or treated water and may not be the best water source for drip irrigation.
2. If possible, install a filter near a good access point where you can check it and clean it when necessary.
3. Check your irrigation controller for correct scheduling and make adjustments for daylight savings, seasonal differences and changes in ambient temperatures.
4. Flush your main line to remove sediment, biological growth and debris.
5. Turn on each valve and check for leaks in the system. Repair leaks immediately to avoid water loss.
6. Cap the system, pressurize and check that all emitters are working properly.
7. If emitters are clogged, try soaking in warm, soapy water. Replace emitters as necessary.
8. Evaluate the landscaped area or crop to see if the plants have grown larger and need more water or emitters to cover the area.
9. Make sure your irrigation system fits your grouping of plants. Shade loving plants should be grouped separate from sun loving plants.
10. Add mulch to the base of plants to keep the soil cool and retain moisture for the plants
11. Clean you irrigation box screen as needed.

