

Irrigation Installation Procedures

Once you have designed your landscape but before you plant, you should design and install an irrigation system. It should be based on the type and location of your landscape plants. You can design and install the system yourself, or hire an expert. This decision depends on your expertise and the time you have to devote to the project.

This section is intended to give an overview of irrigation approaches for High Desert gardens. Nuts and bolts information on how to install your own irrigation system can be obtained by asking for free irrigation publications from any of the water agencies that sponsored this publication (check the inside back cover for how to contact them), or talk to your local nursery, irrigation specialist or landscape professional.

Irrigation components should be based on your landscape needs and the capabilities of your home plumbing system. The following are three things you should do initially, whether you design and install the system yourself or hire a professional:

1. Draw your landscape plan on graph paper. Include all trees, shrubs, turfgrass and groundcover areas, as well as hardscapes. Mark the location of the service line to your home.
2. Use a pressure gage to determine the static water pressure. Do this at the outside faucet when no water is running inside or outside. Take several readings throughout the day and use the lowest for designing your system.
3. Determine the size of the service line running from the street to your house and record the size of your water meter.

Here are some design and installation tips:

- Divide areas to be irrigated into squares and rectangles whenever possible.
- Install sprinklers in corners first. Then, install around the perimeter and finally in the center as needed for full coverage.
- Space sprinkler heads for head-to-head coverage.

Select sprinkler types (impulse, closed case rotors, spray heads and bubblers) according to size and use of area.

- Irrigate shrubs, trees and flower beds with drip systems whenever possible.
- Select sprinkler heads according to available pressure. If your static water pressure is less than 40 psi, use plastic heads rather than brass.
- Several circuits are necessary due to water pressure and volume limitations. Each circuit is controlled by one valve. Group control valves together in a convenient location for easy access.
- Consider installing an automatic timer. Select a timer that is compatible with your irrigation scheduling needs.

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