

# YOUR YARD

## 10 Tips Toward Sprinkler Season Smarts

(NAPSA)—You might be able to save money and protect our environment simply by giving your in-ground sprinkler system an annual checkup. Doing this will help keep your lawn and garden healthy and green. A few easy-to-follow tips, from the experts at Rain Bird, can aid you in saving water all season:

### 1. **Get with the program.**

Check your irrigation controls and programs. Make sure your settings are appropriate for expected seasonal rainfall.

2. **Clear your heads.** Look for rocks, dirt, sand and other debris that may block the even flow of water from sprinkler heads; uneven distribution can lead to too much water in some areas and not enough in others.

3. **Do the cancan.** Conduct a “can test” for even watering. Place open, empty tin cans or paper cups every 10 to 15 feet throughout your yard and begin watering. Compare the level of water in each receptacle. If the water levels differ significantly, adjust the flow and spray pattern of the sprinklers as needed.

4. **Out with the old, in with the new.** Replace cracked, chipped or worn plastic nozzles. A broken sprinkler can wreak havoc on lawns and water bills.

5. **Don't be deceived by warm air temperatures.** That may not mean increased ground temperature. Use a small shovel to make sure that the ground below the lawn and garden is frost-free to a full 12 inches. Irrigating while the ground is frozen may result in a burst pipe.

6. **Follow the rule of six (inches).** Water long enough to saturate the soil six inches deep. Poke a screwdriver into the soil to see how deep the water is being



**Water, water everywhere your lawn needs it is easier to achieve when you're sure your sprinkler system is in tip-top shape.**

absorbed. If the screwdriver meets resistance caused by dry-hardened soil less than six inches from the surface, adjust watering times to increase soil saturation.

7. **Flush it out.** Twist two sprinkler heads completely off and then turn on the sprinkler system for two or three minutes. This should flush out any debris and relieve air pressure in underground pipes.

8. **Value your valves.** A leaky valve will waste water. Inspect each valve to make sure it is operating properly. Overly wet areas in the lawn, resulting in muddy patches, may be a sign of a leaky valve.

9. **Be prepared.** Replace the backup battery in the timer-controller every six months and keep a copy of the watering schedule nearby. A power surge or brief outage could cause the timer-controller to reset and clear all the preset watering programs.

10. **Learn more.** Further information on irrigation system maintenance and water conservation in the yard is available at [www.rainbird.com](http://www.rainbird.com).