

Getting Your Irrigation System Ready For Winter

(NAPSA)—Increasingly, lawn care is becoming a year-round process. No matter the season, there are things a homeowner must take care of in order to keep a lawn looking its best.

For example, if you use a sprinkler system to help keep your lawn in great shape, there are certain tasks you must perform before winter arrives.

Experts recommend that you winterize your system around the middle of autumn to make certain that the job is done before any freezing occurs. The process mainly consists of getting all the water out of the lines. When water is left in the system and freezes, it can damage the valves and other system components.

Here are some tips from the experts at Rain Bird:

- **Start by turning off the timer.** Automatic irrigation systems have a controller or timer. Most controllers have a “rain” or “off” mode that shuts off the signals to the valves. Turning it “off” allows the controller to keep all the essential programming information stored in it. The only change is that the valves will not activate. If you unplug or cut the power to your controller, you may need to reprogram it in the spring.

- **Make sure the water is off.** Shutting off the main water supply helps to protect the system from freezing.

Also, wrap the valve in insulation (foam insulation tape and a plastic bag). If your system doesn't have a main shutoff valve, installing one to protect your investment is a good idea.

- **Next—drain pipes to keep them from freezing.** Those who



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live in colder regions will want to remove the water from pipes to keep them from freezing and bursting.

There are several ways to drain pipes, including draining the valves manually and using compressed air to “blow out” the system. Since there can be some risk involved, it's always a good idea to contact an irrigation system specialist. It's also a good idea to insulate any above-ground pipes.

- **Backflow preventers and valves that are aboveground need to be insulated, too.** Since this can be a complicated process, you may want to speak with an irrigation specialist, such as those at Rain Bird.

- **Learn more.** For more irrigation tips as well as information on where to find a specialist, visit www.rainbird.com or call (800) RAINBIRD.