



Tips on How to Set an Automatic Sprinkler Timer/Controller

Overwatering your landscape can result in the runoff of fertilizers and lawn chemicals into nearby waterbodies and cause pollution. One way to avoid overwatering is to ensure that your irrigation system is operating properly. Setting an automatic sprinkler timer/controller can be confusing if you are not familiar with the device or can't locate its operating manual, but it doesn't have to be. A majority of timers fall into two categories, either digital or mechanical. Digital controllers, used on many new irrigation systems, usually have an LCD and buttons to input operating information, while the mechanical timer found on most irrigation systems usually has a yellow circular face containing times with notches cut into it for the brass "activation" pins. This article discusses how to set a mechanical timer.

The mechanical timer's (Figure 1) operation is dependent upon a single silver pin and multiple brass pins placed in specific slots that control the times of the day that the irrigation system is activated and the duration of activation. The amount of brass pins you need will vary depending on the number of irrigation zones in the yard and the desired length of the irrigation cycle. The large yellow irrigation clock in the center represents a 24-hour day, and right below the clock is a smaller silver and black wheel (called the "Skipper" wheel) that represents a 14 day schedule.

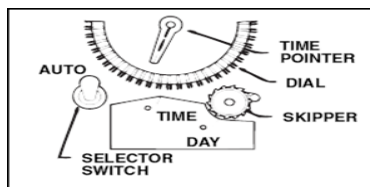


Figure 2: Features of a Mechanical Timer

Programming Instructions

1. TO SET FIRST ZONE: For watering, push brass pin into slot on yellow dial at desired "ON" time. For each 12 minutes of additional watering add one pin WITHOUT skipping a slot.
2. TO CHANGE ZONES: Leave one blank slot on yellow dial after "ON" line (brass pin), and valve will automatically advance to the next zone.
3. TO SET ADDITIONAL ZONES: Repeat steps 1 and 2. REMEMBER to leave blank space between zones

4. TO SET TIME OF DAY: Turn yellow dial CLOCKWISE, until correct line is at end of silver time pointer. Do NOT turn silver pointer.
5. TO SKIP DAYS: Turn black skipper wheel COUNTER-CLOCKWISE until today's day is in front of "14" arrow. Press pins DOWN on days of NO watering.
6. PUT SELECTOR SWITCH IN AUTO: This switch can be used to turn the system ON or OFF for manual operation without affecting the set program.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Use the one silver pin located at 12 Midnight on the yellow dial, it advances the skipper wheel automatically. Do NOT use multiple silver pins.

Please note that all irrigation settings should be in accordance with current water restrictions. A link to the most current information on water restrictions is provided below.

Resources:

1. **Water Restrictions in Broward County**

<http://www.broward.org/NaturalResources/WaterResources/Pages/WaterConservation.aspx>

2. **Irrigation Manufacturers (Mechanical)**

- a. The vast majority of mechanical timers are made by Intermatic, Inc. Their website and instruction guides can be found at : <http://www.intermatic.com> Go to Products, Energy Controls, Mechanical Time Switches, Specialty Time Switches, R8800/T8800 Series