

Waste Water...Waste Money!

"Next to air, water is the most taken-for-granted gift from God," declares Brad Bays. He should know. As owner of ProLawn, the landscape maintenance firm he started in 1981, he's seen plenty of water go to waste because of poorly designed irrigation systems. "It is not going to stay like this forever," he cautions.

Water is a critical resource in maintaining the health and beauty of a landscape of any size, and Bays believes that the only way to ensure its proper distribution is to install a professional system. "Gaps and dead spots in systems where areas are not receiving water evenly is not the mark of a professionally designed irrigation system," he says.

"At ProLawn we look for ways to help our clients save every drop of water we can. To do that we place water where it needs to be and when it needs to be there for the most cost-effective and efficient system possible," he explains.

With over 25 years of experience caring for properties ranging from massive industrial sites covering 10 acres, to small

condominium yards, Bays looks for three elements to determine the quality of an irrigation system.

Design – In order to design a system correctly, the landscaper must first know the water supply. "That tells us which products to use and the time we have allotted to water," he explains. Bays points out that the infiltration rate of Greenville's heavy clay soil is very low. "You don't want to water it all in one day because you'll use three times what you need." Therefore it's also necessary to understand and interpret hydraulics, plant science, and electrical science, in order to customize a system for a particular site.

Build – Using the appropriate materials including correctly sized pipe, and properly spaced sprinkler heads will determine efficiency. "Poor construction forces the client to run their system longer in order to get results." He also advises never to mix different types of sprinkler heads in a system. "Mist heads extend 15 feet, but rotary sprinklers throw 40 feet. The amount of water per square foot is so drastically different you would have some spots dry and others flooded," he says.

Service – "Even though our climate is typically moderate," says Bays, "when temperatures dipped to 10 degrees last winter, many systems were damaged



by the freeze." ProLawn has a winterization program that uses compressed air to blow out pipes and protect the system, no matter how cold it gets. In the spring, systems are re-pressurized zone by zone.

His team inspects their clients' systems twice a year, performs tune-ups, and remedies any inefficiencies. "It is just like owning a car: failure to service it will result in low fuel efficiency. For irrigation systems, we want clean nozzles and for the valves to turn on and off correctly."

Bays says, "We have to respect this wonderful natural resource and use it wisely. We help our customers understand that. We save them money, and allow them to be responsible citizens of this planet."

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