

### **Rain Sensors Save You Money by Shawn Jadrnicek**

Have you ever passed by a house with sprinklers shooting across the yard while it's pouring rain? Installing a rain sensor will save you money and conserve water because it temporarily turns off your irrigation system during the rain. Rain sensors also save your irrigation system from unnecessary wear and tear since they are used only when needed.

To truly appreciate the benefits of a rain sensor, let's crunch the numbers and calculate the savings. An average sprinkler produces about 300 gallons per hour. The average lawn uses about four of these sprinklers producing a total of 1,200 gallons at each watering. Considering we have about 35 substantial rain events a year supplementing our irrigation systems, a rain sensor could save you a total of 42,000 gallons of water every year. In Walterboro that equates to a yearly savings of \$105.00 and in the Beaufort and Jasper Counties you can expect savings of \$134.00 yearly. The savings outweighs the cost of the device which averages \$25.00.

The device works by sensing a preset amount of rain water, usually  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of rain. When rainfall reaches the preset amount, the sensor shuts the irrigation system off. The system will not resume until the rain sensor has dried out. It's important to place your rain sensor in direct sunlight away from roof runoff and trees that may change the amount of water entering the sensor and how it dries out. Also, make sure the sensor is not placed in the range of the irrigation system or irrigation water will turn the system off.

The sensor is easy to install and comes with complete instructions. Rain sensors will save you money, conserve water, and prevent disease problems associated with over-watering. Consider a rain sensor as an investment that pays for itself every time it rains.

Shawn Jadrnicek is an agent with the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service for Colleton/Jasper County. To sign up for the next Master Gardener class call (843) 549-2595 ext.113.