

# TOP TEN QUESTIONS FOR IRRIGATION SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

**1. What would you like your landscape to look like in mid-summer after 3 weeks with little to no rain? Another way to ask the same question is; is the appearance of the landscape important to the attractiveness of the site?**

In both cases we are trying to determine if an irrigation system is required. If appearance is important then an irrigation system will be required to main the “look”. In all cases the irrigation system is used to ensure that the landscape is as healthy as possible.

**2. Are you interested in water conservation? We get “Yes” and “Yes but what does it cost.**

As long as we get a “Yes” we can work towards a good quality irrigation system with the customers buy in. Cost may determine how far they are willing to go to be conservative of the water source but that can be worked out.

**3. What are we going to irrigate, turf, shrubs, trees, annuals, ground covers?**

If they are only going to irrigate turf and annuals then how are they going to ensure the health of the shrubs, trees and ground covers? If they want to hand water we need to provide hose connection points throughout the system to make that process easy.

**4. Where do they want to irrigated?**

A property can be divided up into areas of differing importance. Based on importance the area may or may not be irrigated. It is more important to irrigate the important areas properly then it is to irrigate everything poorly. Want to save money on the cost of the irrigation system then irrigate less area.

**5. How will the irrigation system be maintained in the future?**

If the site is maintained inexpensively then the irrigation system needs to be self adjusting and simple to use. If the site will have a higher level of maintenance the system can still be self adjusting but it may have advanced features to help in maintaining the landscape.

If the site will have inexpensive maintenance the water delivery system, sprinklers and so forth, need to be as bullet proof as possible. Drip irrigation is not a good option for cheaply maintained sites, although drip is less costly to install on trees and shrubs than over-head spray.

## **6. Who will maintain the irrigation system?**

The irrigation control system needs to be matched to the skill level of the future user. In many cases high end control systems have been applied to sites only to become expensive on/off devices.

## **7. What are our potential water sources?**

Depending on site size this is our preferred water source list in order of preference.

Stormwater retention basin above or below ground they both harvest rainfall.

Reclaimed wastewater.

Well.

Potable.

## **8. Are having low long term irrigation maintenance costs important to them?**

Of course a better built system will provide longer long term operational costs. If they are interested in lower long term operational costs, construction management (right from the beginning) of the system is important to ensure it is well built.

## **9. Are they interested in getting competitive bids based on the same irrigation system installation?**

If so it is very important to get the irrigation system designed to meet the customer's goals. It is our belief that the cost of the irrigation system design and specifications are always off-set by lower construction costs for the agreed upon product and lower operational costs overtime. The ROI is very short, from immediately after the bid process to within a couple of years.

**10. Are they concerned about the potential liability to over-spray onto roads and walks that may lead to slip and falls or traffic accidents?**

If so the intent of the irrigation system must be to keep the water off of the hardscape. If someone slips on a wet walk and breaks a hip the costs to the owner, irrigation contractor, and management company will be huge. If the irrigation system is designed with intent being to keep water off the hardscape then it is very difficult for an injured party to extract money from an accident.