

DRIP TROUBLESHOOTING CHECKLIST

Six Steps to Uncovering Potential Drip System Problems

When watering landscapes with drip irrigation systems, it is important to recognize that systems need yearly maintenance, preferably twice a year. Drip systems need to be thoroughly checked for broken and/or damaged components to ensure plants are getting all of their watering requirements met. Below is a guide to help navigate you through an annual physical for a drip irrigation system. A step-by-step inspection of each component will uncover potential water wasting problems and damaged components. Repairing or replacing these components is much easier and less expensive than sprinkler systems, and do not require a lot of digging, gluing or expensive supplies.



○ Check the pressure

Most drip systems operate best in a pressure range of 20 to 50 psi. High pressure is typically the reason for a drip irrigation system to function improperly. If pressure is too high, install or replace the regulator. If the pressure is too low consider removing the regulator or increasing to a regulator with a higher pressure threshold.

○ Check the controller

Turn on the controller and perform a manual run to operate each valve. Make sure all valves are opening and closing properly with no signs of leaks around the solenoid or flow control. Run irrigation for each valve zone long enough to walk the site to check thoroughly for leaks or defective emitters. Mark leaks with landscape paint or flags. Check the timer run times to ensure that plant water requirements are met but not over watered. If the controller is battery operated, replace the batteries.

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○ Clean the filter and flush the system

With the use of many different water types (i.e. grey water, re-claimed water) it is imperative that the proper filter size and filter types are installed to protect your drip irrigation system. Filters can drastically improve the longevity of your emitters by helping to prevent clogging due to increased sediments and other contaminants present in the various water types. Remove the filter and clean it beneath running water then re-install. Also, open up the end of your distribution tubing main line(s) and flush using a manual run from the controller.

○ Inspect the tubing and repair leaks

When repairing tubing, cut out the entire damaged section of tubing about an additional inch on either side. Use a patch of new tubing and connect it to the undamaged part in the line so that the fitting slips on easily to provide a secure connection. After the repairs are complete, open the closed end of the line and flush the line of all sediment and debris that can accumulate in the tubing. Re-pressurize the lines, run the irrigation once more and check for leaks again.

○ Cover drip irrigation tubing with mulch

Take care to cover bare spots where tubing is exposed. Mulch is great for conserving water by helping to prevent evaporation and reducing weed growth. Drip irrigation systems can be easily installed to become virtually invisible amongst the landscape, creating a very clean aesthetic look. For more assured success in this market, keeping clients happy means repairing obvious imperfections that make the site look less than professionally maintained.

○ Use quality, reputable products

When maintaining or installing a drip system, it is important to use commercial grade plastic products that can withstand poor water quality, UV exposure, and varying climatic changes. Commercial grade plastics are impact resistant and will add to the longevity of a drip system. An entire system built with low-grade components will break down much more quickly and even replacing the entire system might be needed.



Take the initiative, join Team Water Matters and switch to drip today! For more information, visit www.digcorp.com/SIM2014 #SIM2014 #WaterMatters

