



## Smart Irrigation Controllers

By Jacob Cheatham

Knowing how to set your irrigation controller can be a huge challenge! The decisions on watering days, start times, and run times can add up and cause confusion. On top of all that, weather conditions can affect how much your irrigation system needs to run. I recently installed a smart irrigation controller at my house to take the guesswork out of setting up my irrigation system, and it has been a life-saver.

Smart controllers replace your standard irrigation controller, usually found in your garage. After some personal research, I decided to install the B-Hyve controller by Orbit, which can be purchased on Amazon. I installed my new controller and set it up within one afternoon. The system can run from your phone once the controller is

installed and paired with your home Wi-Fi, allowing you to manage your irrigation wherever you are.

Once installed, the app will ask questions about each zone in your system. It will ask whether the zone runs sprays, rotors, or drip irrigation. It will ask about sun exposure, soil type, and the plant material that the zone waters. After gathering all this information, the app will schedule irrigation run times based on the weather for your zip code and the information provided. The smart watering schedule can also add parameters to fit within any local watering restrictions.

Now that you are set-up, your smart watering schedule starts; all you have to do is sit back and watch your landscape thrive! Because the watering schedule is personalized to your landscape and weather conditions, you save water and have peace of mind that your turf and plants are doing well.

## INSECTS YOUR PLANTS

Oh, insects! They love your plants as much as you, so be on the lookout for these pesky pests:

- **Aphids** – watch for aphids on the new growth of plants. They cause a sticky residue on plants and the ground. Fungus will then grow on the residue turning plants black. Crape Myrtles are highly susceptible. Control with repeated applications of Neem Oil as needed.
- **Scale** – these insects are various colors and primarily stationary on trunks and branches of any plant. Crape Myrtles are also highly susceptible to scale. Neem Oil will provide temporary control. Also, apply BioAdvanced Tree and Shrub, a granular systemic material, around the base of the plant for 12 months of control. Water into the soil after application.
- **Leaf-Eating Caterpillars** – these insects are a nuisance to soft-leaved plants such as cannas, Hosta lilies, and many others. They will riddle the leaves of plants. Treat with BioAdvanced Tree and Shrub, a granular systemic material, around the base of the plant for 12 months of control, BT (bacillus thuringiensis), or Neem Oil.
- **Mites** – these are a real problem as we get into the heat of summer. Mites feed and weaken many trees, shrubs, perennials, and garden plants. Spider mites are tiny, making them almost undetectable. They feed in colonies and can be almost any color. They hatch in three days and multiply rapidly. Look for stippling on the underside of leaves and, in some instances, webbing. If suspected, shake the leaf on white paper to detect tiny spots. Control with repeated applications of Neem Oil, insecticidal soap, or any product labeled for control of spider mites. Boxwood and catmint are especially susceptible.
- **Armyworms** – these worms are active in turf and are vigorous consumers. They are easily seen on the turf when infected. Control with any granular or liquid turf insecticide. Your grass will be green one day, and it will be gone the next.
- **Grubworms** – these worms are the larva of the June beetle. You can see the beetle spinning on the ground around lights at night. They spin to work down into the soil to deposit their root-feeding larva. If you have an abundance of June beetles, treat all turf and bed areas with a granular insecticide for grub worms.

**Note:** When treating these insects, follow label instructions for application and watering.




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## Lawn Care

By Jennifer Hall

The hotter weather of June promotes faster grass growth! Trying to keep up with the mowing can be a daunting task, but to avoid stressing the grass, remove at most 1/3 of the total length of the grass blade each time you mow.

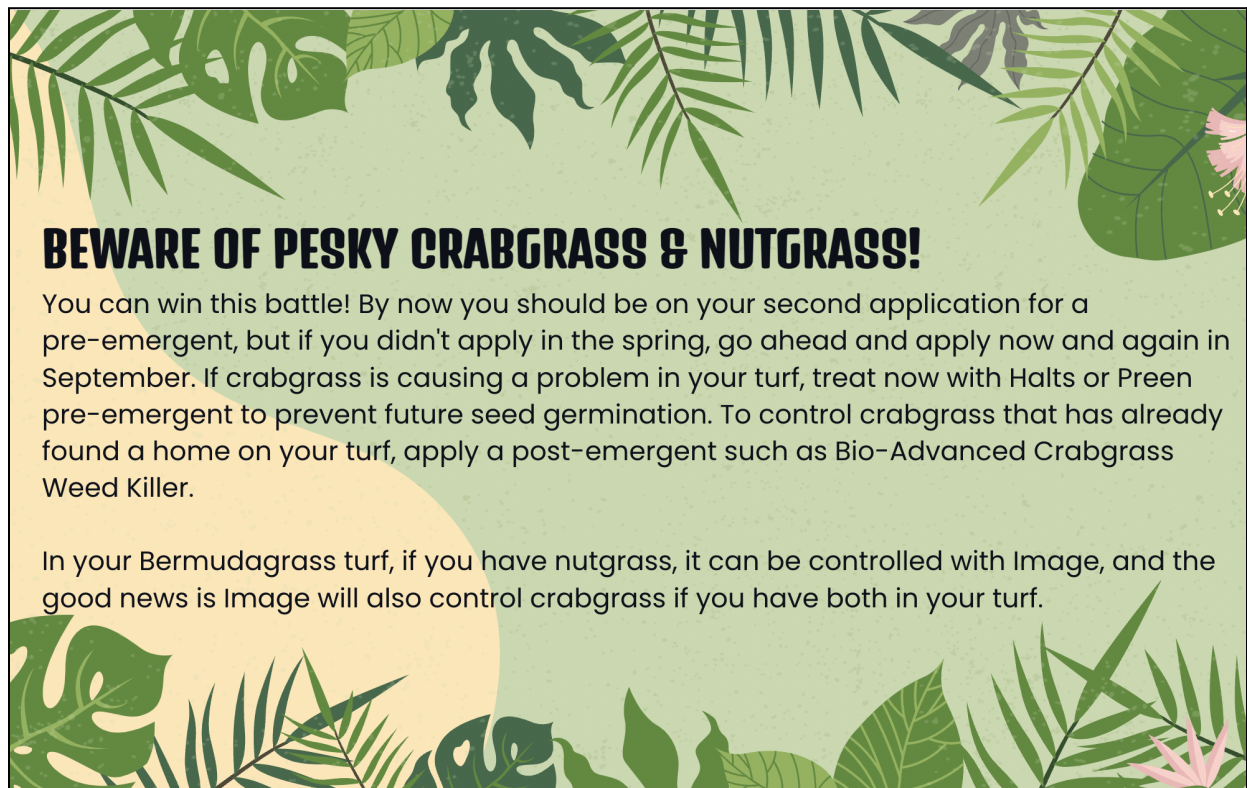
However, if your turf is still weak from freeze damage and not growing as rapidly as you would like, apply a slow-release fertilizer so the lawn will recover and grow gradually. Not all fertilizers are created equal, and a slow-release nitrogen-based fertilizer is much better for feeding your lawn slowly. Quick-release fertilizers are more likely to burn your turf and cause rapid growth for a short period.

In addition, monitor turf for diseases and treat with a turf fungicide if needed. Gray leaf spots and brown patches are prominent in St. Augustinegrass during summer, and you can control them with a

turf fungicide. The brown patch will cause circular yellowing spots in the turf, and the grey leaf spot causes spots on grass blades that are oval or round.

Last but not least, watering is a vital turf health issue. A general recommendation is to water your turf two to three times per week. Run times depend on whether you have spray heads or rotors. Overwatering can lead to turf diseases. If your lawn has a grayish cast, it may need more water. Ensure you have a moisture depth of 4-6 inches. You can check this by inserting a screwdriver into your turf.

Turf covers your yard and is a big part of your landscaping, so keep it looking sharp!



**BEWARE OF PESKY CRABGRASS & NUTGRASS!**

You can win this battle! By now you should be on your second application for a pre-emergent, but if you didn't apply in the spring, go ahead and apply now and again in September. If crabgrass is causing a problem in your turf, treat now with Halts or Preen pre-emergent to prevent future seed germination. To control crabgrass that has already found a home on your turf, apply a post-emergent such as Bio-Advanced Crabgrass Weed Killer.

In your Bermudagrass turf, if you have nutgrass, it can be controlled with Image, and the good news is Image will also control crabgrass if you have both in your turf.

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