

# Anatomy 101 of a Sprinkler System

## Lesson Three by Tom Lanier, Sprinkler Pros

Lesson Three: *The Sprinkler Valve*. This lesson includes 'get to the point and don't confuse me' sentences in **bold**.

**The sprinkler valve is the item that actually turns the water on and off to each sprinkler line.** Nowadays they are usually electric valves, commonly known as automatic valves as they are wired to a sprinkler system controller (timer). **Most sprinkler valves in this area are of the type called anti-siphon valves because of their functional design that prohibits the possibly contaminated water from back-flowing into your drinking water.** The other type of sprinkler valves are commonly called in-line valves. These are properly installed below grade (below ground) incased in a PVC valve box. If you have in-line valves you should have a backflow device upstream from the sprinkler valves to keep the ucky water from backing into your house water. In-line valves installed above grade do not accomplish the same affect as anti-siphon valves. **The proper height for anti-siphon valves is 12-18" above grade (above the ground) for them to work properly.** Okay actually it's above the highest sprinkler head (spray nozzle) or drip line if the line is at a higher altitude than its sprinkler valve. Recently I rebuilt a set of sprinkler valves that had been installed below

grade and tilted at an angle. It was no surprise that the two lowest valves in the set wouldn't shut off automatically when they were supposed to. If you do have sprinkler lines and heads higher than the sprinkler valves there are remedies that you can call me about.

Michael McClary said, "Irrigation of the land with seawater desalinated by fusion power is ancient. It's called 'rain.'" McClary, we could use a bi' mor' o' that precipitation, we could.

**Most electric sprinkler valves can be activated manually via a bleed screw or by turning the solenoid about a quarter turn counterclockwise.** This is helpful if the timer is giving you trouble and you need to water your landscape. The solenoid is the (normally) cylindrical device that has two wires growing out of it. Watertite wire nuts should be used on the wire connections to avoid eventual corrosion.

Another note about proper installation is that the vertical piping below the anti-siphon valves should be gray schedule 80 PVC as it is UV resistant unlike the white PVC pipe that can grow slime inside the pipe . . . ewww!!

If you have sprinkler work needed, be sure to call now. Don't wait until the heat turns up. **My cell phone:** .