

Keeping it GREEN...



NEWS FROM RAINTREE

Spring 2010

What is happening with the weather? The last two summers have been very cool and wet and this past winter has been described as the winter that never was. March surprised us all with several days of record warm weather with some days equaling the warmest day last summer. El Nino has been the explanation of our warm winter along with the warmer/dryer than normal spring. Usually, in El Nino years, the summers have been warmer with very little rainfall. Can this be our prediction for this summer?

Because last summer was quite wet, sprinkler systems were used sparingly. The same was true with the 2008 summer. It has been our experience that when we have two wet summers (eg: 1992 and 1993), sprinkler systems have issues that have gone uncorrected for 2 years which creates an overload for our service technicians to deal with. This is especially true if this summer is indeed dry and warmer than normal and everyone starts using their systems to the maximum. It is therefore essential that you check out your system or have our technicians check it early before we get severely backlogged. Also, with the limited use of the sprinkler system last year, grass tends to grow over the sprinkler heads. When it comes time to turn on the system this spring, some sprinklers cannot pop up through the turf. If you start up your own system, this is something you should be aware of.

NOTE: During our peak springtime (April 26 – July 1) the office will be open through the week from 8 AM till 6 PM and on Saturdays from 8 AM till 2 PM until the end of June.

Harmonized Sales Tax

The new HST (Harmonized Sales Tax = 13%) will increase the cost of most services we provide. In previous years and up to July 1st of this year, we only charged 5% GST on work and parts we provided. Under the new HST, 8% PST is combined with the 5% GST on all labour and materials on all installations and service. For customers on Maintenance Contracts, if payment is made BEFORE May 1st, GST is charged. If payment is received on or after May 1st, HST is applicable on any portion of the service completed after July 1st. Therefore, if you want to avoid charges later on your Maintenance Contract, please make sure your payment is in before May 1st.

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WHAT'S INSIDE



RAINTREE

Irrigation & Outdoor Systems (Since 1987)

www.raintree.on.ca

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Spring Opening of Your Sprinkler System



Note: We do not usually send out letters for spring openings as we do for fall closings because in the spring we need access to your controller and possibly to check other aspects of the system so we need someone available on site. This year we did send out post cards, emails and letters to a limited number of customers

to explore using this approach in the future. For those customers who did not receive a post card, we will be contacting you by phone to schedule your spring opening. If you have not heard from us, please give us

a call. Also, we are continuing the procedure for spring openings whereby we open the system, go through it, adjust heads where required and make any necessary repairs to keep the system running. However, if heads need to be moved, added, or other alterations made, unless of a minor nature, we will return later to do this work after spring openings have been completed when we have more time available. There will be no service charge for these returned calls (there will be a charge for the work performed).

If you start up your own system, (there are instructions in your operations manual – assuming Raintree installed your system) check every zone to ensure all heads are working and adjusted properly. Set the controller according to past watering schedule and call Raintree for any required repairs. If heads are not straight, Raintree can assist in straightening them if you do not wish to tackle this task.

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Mid Season Inspections

It is advisable that someone check your system every 3 – 4 weeks to ensure that the sprinkler heads are all working and adjusted properly. The controller should be adjusted according to the average temperature and weather conditions. If you or someone at your property is not available to do this, call us about our mid season inspection rates.



- Irrigation system installation, maintenance & repair
- Do-it-yourself sales (including pipe installation if required)
- Water Management
- Drainage
- Landscape lighting
- Installation of rainfall harvesting tanks/cisterns
- Installation of pumps and pumping systems

OUR SERVICES

Overdue Accounts

In the past we have not enforced the charging of 2% interest on overdue accounts. This policy has changed for 2010. We have started to enforce the service charge on overdue accounts after 30 days. To avoid this, customers may wish to leave their credit card number with our staff when the work is booked.



Why Raintree?



We are often asked “why are you any different than other companies out there?” We feel the answer to this question is easy – our employees. We have numerous employees who have five or more years experience in our employ.

Training and upgrading is a key priority. Each spring we provide in-house training. In addition, we probably have more Certified employees than any company in Canada and among the top few in North America. These certifications are provided upon successful completion of course training by either the Irrigation Association (IA) (a world-wide irrigation trade association based in the US) or Landscape Ontario (LO). At present, we have 3 Certified Irrigation Contractors (IA), 4 Certified Irrigation Auditors with 1 pending (IA) and 13 Certified Irrigation Technicians with 3 pending (LO). Good Luck to Kyle Murphy, Steve Prankie and Trevor Donaldson who recently completed their Certified Irrigation Technician course work and written their exams. Also to Dave Kazlovskis who has taken his Certified Landscape Irrigation Auditor course work and exam. In addition, Brian Macartney is presently undertaking the Certified Irrigation Designer Program.

While we feel there are other numerous features that distinguish Raintree from its competitors, the fact that you can always reach us by telephone during regular office hours has always been a priority of Raintree and its management. There is no menu-driven procedure to follow in order to talk to someone. Also Raintree does not sub contract its service and installation work. In this way, we ensure quality of workmanship.



Maintenance Contracts

We offer Maintenance Contracts to our customers. They include the spring opening and fall

closing of the system. Mid season inspections can also be incorporated into the contract. As part of the Maintenance Contract, we offer “within the next working day” service for calls made by 10:00 AM. We offer 10% discount on all parts used during service. **New this year** is a Maintenance Contract for winterization only. The advantage with this contract is it provides “within next day service” for prepaid contracts. It also represents a 8% saving this year for anyone paying before May 1st on HST.

Give our office a call to get a quotation on a Maintenance Contract for your system.

New Products

✓ Rain Bird SMRT-Y Soil Moisture Sensor

This is a soil moisture probe that is installed in the root zone (usually 4-6 inches deep in grass) in a typical area of the property (not too wet or under the shade of a tree or sheltered by a building, etc.) that is irrigated. The sensor takes soil moisture readings every 10 minutes. The controller is set to water daily and when the sensor detects dry conditions, the controller will provide irrigation at its next programmed cycle. When the soil moisture rises above a set threshold, the watering cycle is suspended to avoid wasting water. When this Sensor was tested in one of our homes last year, the sprinkler only came on 7 times. The cost varies depending on where a typical location can be found in your property but a base price would be around \$400.00 + HST.



✓ Rain Bird SMT Smart Control System

This controller combines the features of the ESP controller we have been installing for the past several years with a mini weather station that collects data on rainfall and temperature and combines it with historical data such as average wind speed and humidity (factors that affect transpiration in plants – similar to sweating in humans). The mini weather station is usually mounted where it exposed to all the weather components mentioned above. By using this data the controller adjusts the watering schedule to prevent over or under watering. This controller should be considered by customers requiring a new controller and by those with medium to larger systems with fewer than 14 zones. Your existing ESP controller can be converted to Smart Control. Cost does vary depending on the size of your system and other factors but ranges from \$800-\$1200.00 installed. While the cost may seem high, the cost can often be recovered in water savings as data we have received to date suggest reductions in water usage of 35-70%.



Free Winterization or Service

Raintree has grown to be one of the largest irrigation companies in Canada. This growth would not have been possible without the support of our many customers who refer us to their friends or neighbours. We appreciate your support of our work, our employees and our company. When we install a system

resulting from your referral, we will provide as a thank you, a free winterization or the equivalent value in service. We usually notify the recipients we know of, but if someone you have referred has had a system installed by Raintree and you have not been notified, please bring it to our attention.



RAIN TREE
Irrigation & Outdoor Systems
(Since 1987)

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All other areas 877-545-1323

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www.raintree.on.ca

If you go to our web site, www.raintree.on.ca you will find a survey which we ask you to complete. By doing so you will be entered in a draw for a

FREE Winterization or Service

By completing this survey, we will receive input on how we can improve our service to you. We are always striving to improve our business and you can help us by pointing out areas where we can improve.

Employee Focus



TOM BODNAR

Tom Bodnar is celebrating 20 years employment with Raintree Irrigation. Tom started as our Office Manager operating our small store selling lawn sprinkler parts and Do-It-Yourself systems and was responsible for our office service operation. In 1996 he became our Estimator/Designer for installed systems where he has been employed since that time. Thanks Tom for your continued service and dedication!

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