

Catch Can Test for Irrigation

1. Place six straight sided containers (for example tuna cans) in the area that is irrigated and run the irrigation for 15 minutes.
2. Then measure the depth of water collected (in inches) and then multiply by 4 to get the depth of water applied per hour (inches/hour).

Calculating Irrigation Run Time

IFAS recommendations are to apply no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch of water per irrigation event to prevent over-irrigation.

- To calculate the length of time your irrigation should run per zone (irrigation run time) to achieve a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of water applied to your landscape:
 1. Divide the recommended $\frac{1}{2}$ inch by the application rate (inches/hour) you found using the catch can test
 2. Multiply by 60 to get the irrigation run time in minutes

Example: Catch can application rate of 2 inches/hour

$$\frac{1}{2} \text{ inch} \div 2 \frac{\text{inches}}{\text{hour}} = \frac{1}{4} \text{ hour}$$

$$\frac{1}{4} \text{ hour} \times 60 \frac{\text{minutes}}{\text{hour}} = 15 \text{ minutes}$$

Answer: Irrigation run time should be 15 minutes per irrigation event.

- If the irrigation run time for a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of irrigation does not appear to be enough for plant needs either:
 1. Calculate the run time for $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch of irrigation
 2. Irrigation run time can be increased to account for inefficiencies in the irrigation system by dividing the run time by 0.6 (generalized efficiency factor)

Example: 15 min run time based on catch can test and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of water to be applied

$$\frac{15 \text{ minutes}}{0.6} = 25 \text{ minutes}$$

Answer: the new irrigation run time for an irrigation zone with an application rate of 2 inches per hour, accounting for irrigation system efficiency, would be 25 minutes.