



This past month Wickenburg Landscape is pleased to announce that our landscape foreman Jon Tacket has earned official national recognition as a certified concrete paver installer. We now have four certified concrete paver installers on our staff. We currently have another one of our employees, Lemuel McGuire, attending courses for paver certification along with Jeff Dolney finishing the process of becoming a certified arborist. We look forward to having a certified arborist on staff to help maintain our trees as well as possible.

This ongoing training of our employees is a

very important to us and a critical part of our company's future success. As one of the three parts of our company's mission statement which states we are dedicated to hiring, teaching, and working with highly skilled employees. We believe that this ongoing training has set our company apart from others in our industry and we are constantly looking for areas to continue our education. Zig Ziglar once famously said that it is better to train an employee and have them leave your company than to not train an employee and keep them forever.

I believe in our company's vision of bettering the life of our most valuable asset, our employee and to do this I will encourage everyone in our company to continue to grow and learn and become better people, and in becoming better they will in turn become better employees and serve our clients in a more professional and caring way.

An irrigation valve is simply the device that turns on and off the water that continues through the irrigation lines to your plants. There are three important things to understand about our irrigation valves. 1 -They can be turned on manually 2- they can be turned on automatically usually through an irrigation controller 3 - they not only allow water to flow through them they also can regulate how much water flows through them.

First, to turn on a valve manually you need to realize there are two ways to perform this on most modern valves. The first is the



external bleed screw. By slightly unscrewing the "bleeder" screw this lets air into the top chamber of the valve breaking the internal vacuum which turns on the valve. To turn off the valve you would simply hand tighten the bleeder screw and wait a few seconds for the vacuum to build which will turn off the valve. This process lets water out of the valves and can sometimes leave an area wet or an irrigation box flooded if left on for an extended period of time.

The second and more common way to manually turn on irrigation valves is to unscrew the solenoid about 1/4-1/2 turn. This is called an internal bleed which breaks the vacuum by letting air into the top of the valve through the pipe after the valves. This is much cleaner as no water sprays out of the top of the screw. If a valve is going to be left on manually for any duration of time this will eliminate the irrigation box from filling with water. To turn off simply hand tighten the solenoid and wait a few seconds while the vacuum builds and the valve shuts down. The larger and older a valve

is the longer it takes for a vacuum to build. It is not uncommon for this process to take up to 30 seconds.

The other way to operate a valve is electrically. This way of operating a valve is to turn it on and off through an irrigation controller. This is pretty simple and is done differently from each controller but is done either through a scheduled program or through a manual setting on the controller. The way a valve controls the amount of water that flows through it is through a flow control. This device is on the center of the valves and usually has a slot for a flat screwdriver to be inserted. To reduce the flow of water through the valve you would "tighten" the screw. This is done mainly for

lawn valves that need to reduce the amount of water flowing through them to provide better spray patterns through the lawn sprayers. Drip valves would never have their flow controls used. They would always stay completely open. A word of caution on flow controls. They are not a way to shut down a valve from watering. If a flow control is screwed down too tight it will break the internals of a valve's diaphragm. This will create a large problem that usually results in having to replace the valve.

While this has been the introduction of irrigation valves, next month will have the ways a valve functions in an irrigation system and the most common problems associated with them and their fixes.

Uninvited Guests

Pack rats are one of the pests that we find around houses that we really don't want to encounter. Where pack rats are found disaster and expensive repairs are usually to follow. Pack rats usually become more of a problem starting in the spring and multiply quickly with available food and water that we have in and around our yards. The dangers that pack rats pose is that they tear and rip away items that are essential to our houses to use as bedding or to build their nests. Pack rats are sometimes found under trees or in cactus as well as in dense bushes such as rosemary. It is not typical but they can also invade structures and can be found in attics of houses or in storage room or in an unused garage.

The damage that these little critters do is very expensive. They can eat the wiring harnesses out of your vehicle over night causing thousands of dollars of damage as well as the loss of your vehicle during repairs. If they get into your house or a structure they love to eat wiring or at least the protective coating off the wire which increases the danger of a fire. With all the damage that



they cause some people try and get rid of them by poisoning them which is a very dangerous way of dealing with the situation. The danger in poison is that it will move up the food chain and kill unintended other animals. For example if a rat is poisoned and dies while running across the driveway and a bird swoops down and eats the rat and then dies another animal will come in to eat that bird and hopefully at some point it is not the neighbors dog or cat. These are the real possibilities and need to be thought of while trying to get rid of or manage rats around your home.

We would recommend that either a live trap be used or using a rat traps with peanut butter. These traps should be placed around the areas where rats have been known to be at in the past. Usually checking and resetting the traps a couple of times a week will be sufficient to keep the rats under control or at least off your property. Once a rat's nest has been discovered you will need to stay vigilant to keep them away because unfortunately after a period of time the rats will find it easier to just move in at your neighbor's house. When this happens you will need to keep an eye on them at some point moving back to your house.

During the year check the areas around your house such as wood piles, and other areas that provide protection for the rats. If you consistently keep up on watching for them along with removing their nests while they are small you can keep these unwanted pests away from you home and keep the areas around your house safe and secure.

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