

THE GARDEN EXTRAORDINAIRE

SUMMER 2025



50 YEARS OF SUMMER'S BEAUTY

Despite Houston's famously sweltering summers, there is something undeniably enchanting about this season in the garden. The long days invite vibrant blooms to show off in full splendor, pollinators hum busily from flower to flower, and twilight lingers just long enough to enjoy a quiet moment amid the greenery.

At McDugald Steele, we embrace the beauty of this season—heat and all—because it brings the garden to life in unforgettable ways. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary this year, we are especially grateful for every summer that has shaped our legacy and every client who has made these five decades of garden artistry possible. Cheers to creating, constructing and managing extraordinary gardens—even in the heat—and continuing to grow together.

[CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO READ THE FULL NEWSLETTER..](#)

CARE + COLOR SPOTLIGHT

BRIGHT BEDS & HEALTHY ROOTS

SEASONAL COLOR

PLANTS THAT CAN TAKE THE HEAT

Summer might be sizzling, but your garden can still look cool and colorful. McDugald Steele is now installing vibrant seasonal plantings that love the sun and do not mind a little Texas heat.

Meet the summer standouts bringing beauty and resilience to the garden:

- Vincas – Tough, cheerful, and endlessly blooming
- Pentas – Pollinator magnets with bright star-shaped flowers
- Angelonias – Also known as “summer snapdragons,” they add height and grace
- Verbenas – Low maintenance, great for containers and hanging baskets
- Zinnias – A classic choice for summer with bright, cheerful flowers



Whether you're going for bold pops or a soft sweep of color, these plants bring beauty and resilience to your summer garden.

MULCH MATTERS

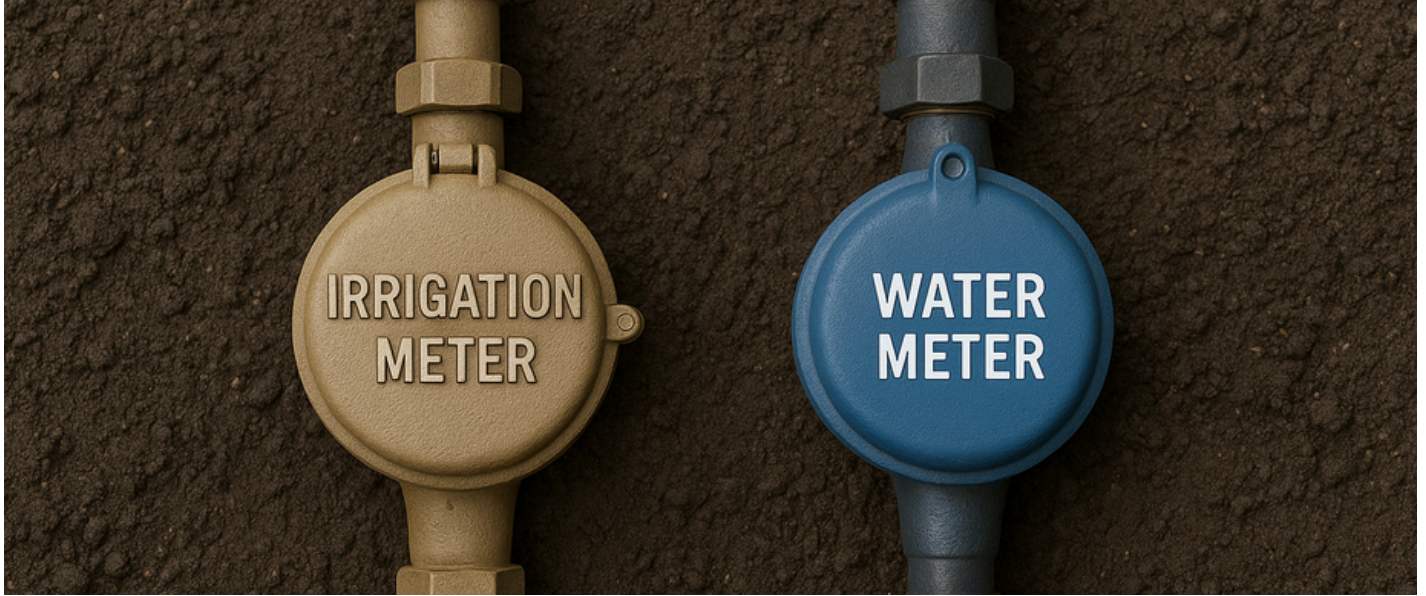
KEEPING ROOTS COOL

As temperatures rise, mulching becomes a must during the summer. Key benefits include **moisture retention** by reducing evaporation, **temperature regulation** by acting as a natural insulator that protects plant roots from heat stress, and **weed suppression** by forming a barrier that prevents weed seeds from germinating and growing.

SEASONAL SPOTLIGHT

THE IRRIGATION METER

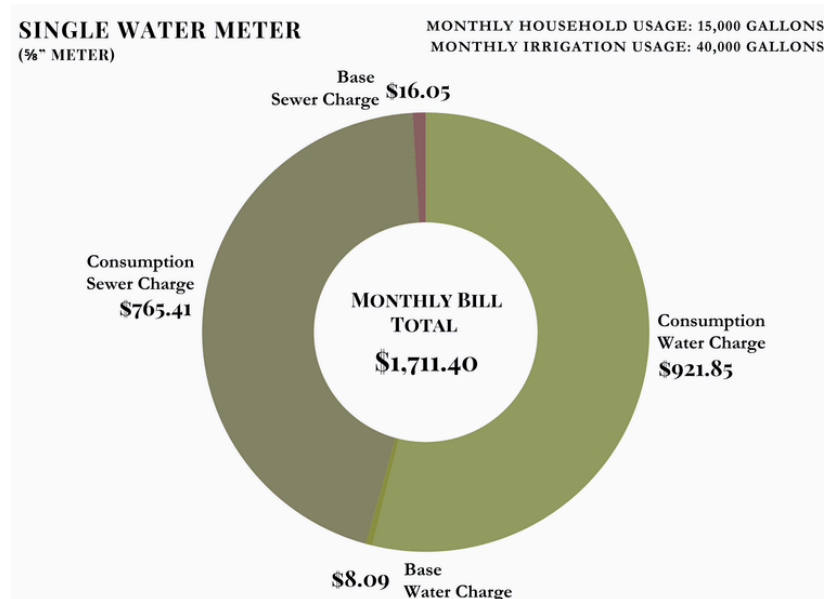
A SOLUTION TO BLOATING WATER BILLS



Many Houston homeowners have felt the strain of high-water bills caused by the city's continued increase of water rates over the last few years. The rate increases combined with the region's sweltering temperatures have Houstonians seeking innovative ways to trim those bloated water bills. The good news is there is a solution that can put you on the path to substantial savings – installing a dedicated irrigation meter.

A typical city water bill has four main components: base water charge, base sewer charge, consumption water charge, and consumption sewer charge. The base water and base sewer charges are fixed fees designed to cover the cost of maintaining infrastructure, regardless of how much water is used. Most homeowners are focused on the consumption water charge and consumption sewer charge when evaluating their monthly bill.

The consumption water charge reflects the actual amount of water used during the billing period, while the consumption sewer charge is the cost of treating the water that goes down the drain into the city sewer system.



** Cost values represented are based on the home's water usage listed above and the City of Houston's rate for water and waste as of April 1, 2025. Values do not include TCEQ fee or drainage fee**

SEASONAL SPOTLIGHT: THE IRRIGATION METER

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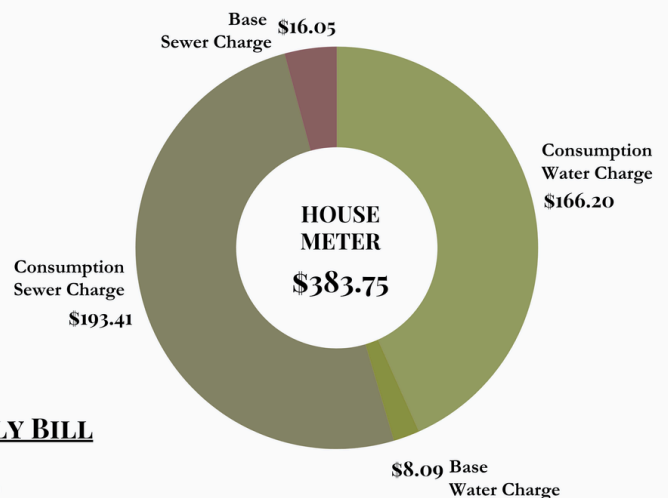
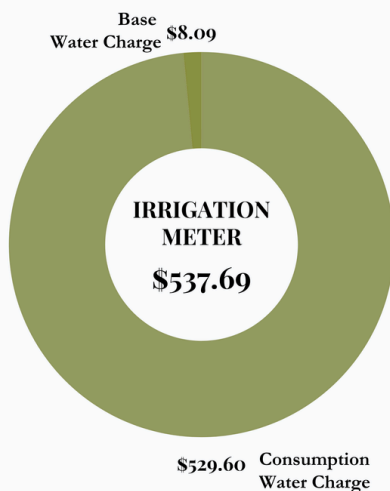
What the city or water provider does not readily disclose is irrigation water, which constitutes a significant portion of a home's water consumption, does not flow into the city sewer system. Instead, it is absorbed into the soil. As a result, many cities, including Houston, offer homeowners the option to install a dedicated irrigation meter that is exempt from the base sewer and consumption sewer charges. For countless homeowners in the Houston area, this presents an excellent opportunity to significantly reduce their water bills, particularly during the warmer months when irrigation systems work overtime.

Once the installation is complete, the homeowner will receive a separate monthly bill for the water that passes through the irrigation meter. This water will not be subject to the base sewer and consumption sewer charges. While this will not reduce overall water consumption, it can lead to a significant reduction in monthly water bill. Additionally, it provides an accurate assessment of your irrigation system's monthly water usage.

TWO WATER METERS
(HOUSE & IRRIGATION, ½" METERS)

MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD USAGE: 15,000 GALLONS

MONTHLY IRRIGATION USAGE: 40,000 GALLONS

**TOTAL MONTHLY BILL****\$921.44****(Estimated savings of \$789.96)**

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON INSTALLING AN IRRIGATION METER,
CONTACT YOUR GARDEN MANAGER.