

NEW BRUNSWICK LANDSCAPING

Irrigation & Watering

Sprinkler systems, drip irrigation, winterization, and
water management for NB landscapes

12 Expert Answers from Landscape IQ

newbrunswicklandscaping.com/construction-brain

Table of Contents

1. When should I turn on my sprinkler system in spring in New Brunswick?
2. How deep should irrigation lines be buried in New Brunswick?
3. What type of sprinkler system works best for New Brunswick lawns?
4. How do I properly winterize an irrigation system before NB's freeze?
5. Is drip irrigation or sprinklers better for NB vegetable gardens?
6. How often should I water my lawn during a New Brunswick summer drought?
7. What are the signs my NB irrigation system needs professional repair?
8. What is the best time of day to water my lawn in New Brunswick?
9. How do I set up a rain barrel system in New Brunswick?
10. Do I need a backflow preventer for my irrigation system in NB?
11. How should I water newly planted trees and shrubs in New Brunswick?
12. How much does it cost to repair a broken sprinkler line in NB?

When should I turn on my sprinkler system in spring in New Brunswick?

You should turn on your sprinkler system in New Brunswick after the last frost date has passed and nighttime temperatures consistently stay above 5°C, which typically means mid-to-late May for most of the province. Activating your system too early risks frozen pipes and cracked fittings if a late frost hits — and NB's unpredictable spring weather makes patience essential. The average last frost dates are approximately May 15 for Saint John, May 20 for Fredericton, and as late as June 1 for northern areas like Bathurst and Campbellton.

Before turning the system on, perform a thorough inspection. Walk the entire system checking for visible damage to above-ground components — sprinkler heads cracked by frost heaving, broken risers from snow removal equipment, and any exposed pipe sections that may have shifted over winter. In NB, frost heaving is a significant concern and can push sprinkler heads out of alignment or crack connections that were perfectly fine in fall. Replace any damaged components before pressurizing the system.

When you are ready to activate, turn the main water supply on slowly — opening the valve gradually over 3-5 minutes rather than all at once. A sudden surge of water pressure into an empty system can cause water hammer, which may crack pipes and fittings that were weakened during winter. Once the system is pressurized, run each zone manually for 3-5 minutes while walking the property to check for leaks, geysers from broken heads, misaligned spray patterns, and proper coverage. Pay particular attention to any zones that run near driveways or walkways where snow plows or ice may have caused damage.

Adjust your spring watering schedule to reflect NB's conditions. In May and early June, New Brunswick typically receives adequate rainfall (average 90-100mm per month), so your system may only need to supplement during dry stretches. Set your controller for 2-3 days per week initially, aiming for about 1 inch of total water (rain plus irrigation) per week. Water deeply and infrequently — 30-45 minutes per zone depending on your sprinkler type — rather than short daily runs, which encourages shallow root development that makes your lawn more vulnerable to NB's summer dry spells.

Consider upgrading to a smart controller with a rain sensor if you do not already have one. These devices automatically skip watering cycles when rainfall is sufficient, saving significant water during NB's wetter spring months. A rain sensor costs \$30-75 and prevents the common waste of running sprinklers during or immediately after rainfall. Most NB irrigation professionals charge \$75-150 for a spring startup service that includes inspection, activation, adjustment, and minor repairs — a worthwhile investment to ensure your system is operating efficiently for the season ahead.

Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- [Urban Landscaping Ltd ?](#)
- [Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?](#)
- [Lawrence Landscaping ?](#)

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Q2

How deep should irrigation lines be buried in New Brunswick?

Irrigation lines in New Brunswick must be buried a minimum of 18-24 inches deep, with 30 inches or more being ideal for main supply lines, to ensure they sit below the province's deep frost penetration zone. NB's frost depth reaches 4-6 feet in inland areas like Fredericton and Woodstock (Zone 4a-4b), which means that even properly buried lines will be above the true frost line — this is why winterization by compressed air blowout is absolutely mandatory every fall, regardless of burial depth.

The depth requirement serves two critical purposes. First, deeper burial provides greater protection against incidental frost damage during spring and fall when the ground is partially frozen but you may still want to use your system. Second, it protects lines from surface damage caused by aeration equipment, rototillers, digging, and the normal settling and heaving of NB soils. **Lateral lines (the pipes running to individual sprinkler heads) should be at least 18 inches deep**, while **main supply lines running from your water source to the valve manifold should be 24-30 inches deep** since they carry the full system pressure and are more costly to repair.

New Brunswick's variable soil types affect installation depth and method. In the **clay soils common in the Saint John and Miramichi river valleys**, digging is more laborious but the soil provides good structural support for buried pipes. However, clay soils also hold moisture that expands significantly during freezing, so slightly deeper burial (24+ inches for laterals) is advisable. In **sandy coastal soils near Moncton and Shediac**, digging is easier but the soil offers less protection, and erosion can gradually expose shallowly buried lines. **Rocky soils in northern NB** (around Bathurst and Campbellton) may require specialized trenching equipment and can significantly increase installation costs.

Use Schedule 40 PVC for main lines and polyethylene (poly) pipe for lateral runs — poly pipe is more flexible and better withstands the ground movement caused by NB's freeze-thaw cycles without cracking. All fittings should

be high-quality clamp or compression fittings rated for underground use. Avoid glued PVC joints in lateral lines because they are rigid and more prone to cracking when the ground shifts.

Professional irrigation installation in New Brunswick typically costs \$3,000-6,000 for a standard residential property, with depth of burial being one of the factors that affects pricing. Contractors who propose burying lines at only 8-12 inches — a depth common in milder climates — should be avoided, as this virtually guarantees frost damage and costly repairs. When hiring an installer, confirm they will bury to a minimum of 18 inches and ask specifically about their winterization service, which should include a compressed air blowout at 50-80 PSI each fall. A properly installed and maintained irrigation system in NB should last 15-25 years with minimal repairs.

Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Leger Steel Roofing ?
- Lawrence Landscaping ?
- Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Q3

What type of sprinkler system works best for New Brunswick lawns?

A professionally designed in-ground rotary or rotor-style sprinkler system with zone-specific heads works best for most New Brunswick lawns, providing the deep, even coverage needed to sustain healthy turf through NB's variable summer conditions while being fully winterizable for the province's harsh winters.

The key is matching head type to area size and shape, with proper zoning that accounts for NB's mixed sun and shade conditions.

Rotor heads (the type that rotate slowly, throwing water 20-50 feet) are ideal for larger open lawn areas common in NB suburban properties — they deliver water slowly and uniformly, which is particularly important for the clay soils found in river valley areas around Fredericton where fast application rates cause runoff. **Fixed spray heads** (pop-up heads with fan-shaped patterns) are better suited for smaller areas, narrow strips along driveways, and garden beds, with throw distances of 4-15 feet. Most NB residential systems use a combination of both types, zoned

separately since they deliver water at different rates.

MP Rotator nozzles (multi-stream rotating nozzles that fit on standard spray head bodies) have become increasingly popular in New Brunswick because they apply water at a very slow rate (about 1/3 the rate of traditional spray heads), virtually eliminating runoff problems on NB's sloped properties and clay soils. They also perform well in the moderate wind conditions common in coastal areas near Saint John and Moncton. While more expensive per head (\$5-8 vs. \$2-4 for standard nozzles), they reduce water waste and provide more uniform coverage.

Zoning is critical for NB conditions. Your system should separate sunny zones from shaded zones, as shaded areas under NB's mature maples, birches, and conifers need 30-50% less water than full-sun areas. Similarly, zone slopes separately from flat areas and separate garden beds from lawn areas. A typical NB residential property (6,000-10,000 square feet of irrigated area) usually requires 4-8 zones. Each zone should be designed so all heads within it have similar precipitation rates and water requirements.

Invest in a smart controller with a rain sensor. Given that New Brunswick receives 1,100-1,200mm of rainfall annually — with most of it concentrated outside the July-August dry period — a rain sensor (\$30-75) or full weather-based smart controller (\$150-400) prevents wasteful watering during NB's frequent rain events. Many modern smart controllers connect to Wi-Fi and can be adjusted from your phone, which is convenient for adjusting schedules during NB's changeable summer weather.

A complete professionally installed system in New Brunswick costs \$3,000-6,000 depending on property size, number of zones, and soil conditions. Ensure your installer uses frost-resistant poly pipe for laterals, buries all lines to a minimum of 18-24 inches, includes a winterization blowout in their annual service package, and provides a spring startup inspection. These NB-specific details are what separates a system that lasts 20 years from one that fails in its first winter.

Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Urban Landscaping Ltd ?
- Leger Steel Roofing ?
- Lawrence Landscaping ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

How do I properly winterize an irrigation system before NB's freeze?

Winterizing your irrigation system in New Brunswick is absolutely essential and should be completed by late October — before the ground begins to freeze — to prevent the catastrophic pipe and fitting damage that frozen water causes in NB's -25°C to -35°C winter temperatures. Unlike milder regions where winterization is optional, failing to properly winterize in New Brunswick will almost certainly result in cracked pipes, split fittings, and broken backflow preventers that cost hundreds or thousands of dollars to repair in spring.

The standard winterization method in NB is a **compressed air blowout**, which forces all remaining water out of the system using an air compressor. You need a compressor capable of delivering **50-80 PSI at a minimum volume of 10 CFM** (cubic feet per minute) for rotor systems, or 80 PSI at 20+ CFM for larger systems with multiple zones. Do not exceed 80 PSI, as higher pressure can damage PVC pipes, poly pipe connections, and sprinkler head mechanisms. Most homeowner-grade compressors are too small — you will likely need to rent a commercial compressor (\$50-80 per day) or hire a professional.

The blowout process follows a specific sequence. First, shut off the main water supply to the irrigation system. Open the drain valve (if equipped) to release standing water from the main line. Connect the air compressor to the blowout fitting — this should be a permanent fitting installed on your system's main line, typically near the backflow preventer. Start with the zone farthest from the compressor and work inward, blowing each zone for **2-3 minutes or until no more water is visible** from any head in that zone. Run each zone through the blowout cycle twice to ensure all water is expelled from low spots and fittings.

After the blowout, take these additional NB-specific steps. Remove and store any above-ground backflow preventers indoors for the winter — these contain rubber seals and brass components that are expensive to replace if frozen (\$200-500 for a new backflow preventer installed). Insulate any above-ground pipe sections or valve boxes with foam insulation covers. Leave the controller powered on but set to the "off" or "rain" position to maintain programming — NB power outages during winter storms can erase schedules if the backup battery dies.

Most NB irrigation professionals charge \$75-150 for a complete winterization service, which includes the compressor, blowout of all zones, draining the backflow preventer, and a visual inspection of the system. Given the potential cost of freeze damage (easily \$500-2,000+ for burst pipes and cracked components), professional winterization is one of the best maintenance investments you can make. Book your appointment in early October, as NB irrigation companies fill their winterization schedules quickly and late October availability can be limited. If you are in a northern NB location like Bathurst or Campbellton (Zone 3b), aim to complete winterization by mid-October as freezing arrives earlier.

Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Urban Landscaping Ltd ?
- Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?
- Leger Steel Roofing ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Q5

Is drip irrigation or sprinklers better for NB vegetable gardens?

Drip irrigation is significantly better than sprinklers for vegetable gardens in New Brunswick, delivering water directly to plant root zones while keeping foliage dry — a critical advantage in NB's humid Maritime climate where wet leaves promote fungal diseases like blight, powdery mildew, and various rots. While sprinklers are the standard choice for lawns, drip systems outperform them in virtually every way when it comes to growing vegetables in NB conditions.

The primary advantage in New Brunswick specifically is **disease prevention**. NB's high humidity (often 70-90% during summer mornings), frequent fog in coastal areas near Saint John and the Fundy coast, and warm summer evenings create ideal conditions for foliar fungal diseases. Overhead sprinklers compound this problem by wetting plant leaves, while drip irrigation keeps the foliage completely dry. Tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, and beans — staples of NB vegetable gardens — are all highly susceptible to fungal diseases that spread through wet foliage. Switching from overhead watering to drip irrigation alone can reduce disease incidence by 50-70%.

Drip irrigation also delivers water more efficiently. A well-designed drip system loses virtually zero water to evaporation or wind drift, compared to 20-40% losses typical of overhead sprinklers. This matters during NB's July-August dry period when supplemental irrigation is most needed and water resources may be limited — particularly for NB properties relying on wells rather than municipal water. Drip systems use 30-50% less water than sprinklers to deliver the same amount of moisture to plant roots.

Setting up a drip system for an NB vegetable garden is straightforward and affordable. A basic kit for a 200-400 square foot garden costs \$50-120 and includes a main supply line (1/2-inch poly tubing), emitter lines or drip tape that run along each row, connectors, and a pressure regulator. Lay the main line along one edge of your garden with emitter lines branching off to each row, spaced to match your planting layout. Use emitters rated at 1-2

gallons per hour, spaced 12 inches apart for most vegetables. Connect to your outdoor spigot with an inexpensive battery-operated timer (\$25-50) to automate watering.

For NB's growing season, run your drip system for 30-60 minutes every other day during normal conditions, increasing to daily during the July-August dry period when temperatures regularly exceed 25°C. Tomatoes and peppers typically need 1-2 inches of water per week, while leafy greens need slightly less. Mulch over your drip lines with straw or shredded leaves to further reduce evaporation — this is especially effective in NB's warmer inland areas around Fredericton.

Winterization is simple — disconnect the system, drain the lines, and store the timer and pressure regulator indoors before NB's first frost (late September to mid-October). Most drip tubing and fittings can remain in the garden over winter without damage if fully drained, though many NB gardeners roll up their lines and store them in a shed or garage to extend their lifespan. A well-maintained drip system will last 5-8 seasons.

Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?
- Leger Steel Roofing ?
- Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Q6

How often should I water my lawn during a New Brunswick summer drought?

During a New Brunswick summer drought, your lawn needs approximately 1 inch of water per week from either rainfall or irrigation, applied in 1-2 deep watering sessions rather than frequent light sprinklings. NB typically receives sufficient rainfall from May through June (90-100mm monthly), but July and August can bring extended dry periods when supplemental irrigation becomes critical for maintaining a green, healthy lawn.

The key principle is **deep and infrequent watering**. Apply 1/2 inch of water twice per week, or a full inch once per week, watering in the early morning (5-9 AM) when evaporation is minimal and wind is typically calm in most NB locations. To measure how long your sprinklers need to run, place several straight-sided containers (tuna cans

work perfectly) across your lawn and time how long it takes to collect 1/2 inch of water — this is your benchmark run time for each session. Most NB rotary sprinkler systems need 30-45 minutes per zone, while fixed spray heads typically need 15-20 minutes.

Deep watering encourages grass roots to grow deeper into the soil, making your lawn naturally more drought-resistant. NB lawns watered deeply develop root systems 6-8 inches deep, while those receiving daily light watering have shallow 2-3 inch roots that wilt at the first sign of drought. This is particularly important in NB's sandy coastal soils near Moncton and Shediac, where water drains quickly and surface moisture evaporates fast during hot spells.

During severe drought, consider letting your lawn go dormant rather than trying to keep it green with constant watering. Cool-season grasses used in NB (Kentucky Bluegrass, Fine Fescue, Perennial Ryegrass) are genetically programmed to survive drought by going dormant — turning brown and stopping growth while the crown and root system remain alive underground. A dormant NB lawn will green up within 2-3 weeks once rain returns, with no lasting damage if the drought lasts less than 4-6 weeks. If you choose to let your lawn go dormant, apply 1/4 inch of water every 2-3 weeks to keep the crowns alive, and avoid all foot traffic on dormant turf.

If you decide to keep watering through a drought, be consistent — the worst approach is alternating between watering and letting the lawn go dormant, as this exhausts the grass's energy reserves. Raise your mowing height to 3.5-4 inches during drought conditions, as taller grass shades the soil surface and reduces evaporation by up to 25%. Leave grass clippings on the lawn to act as a natural mulch. Avoid fertilizing during drought, as the salts in fertilizer can further stress already-dehydrated grass.

NB properties on well water should be especially cautious during extended dry periods, as heavy irrigation can draw down well levels. If your well shows reduced flow, prioritize watering trees and shrubs (which take years to replace) over lawns (which recover from dormancy quickly). Ensure your rain sensor is functioning to prevent wasteful watering during NB's scattered summer thunderstorms.

Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Urban Landscaping Ltd ?
- Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?
- Lawrence Landscaping ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

What are the signs my NB irrigation system needs professional repair?

Your New Brunswick irrigation system needs professional repair when you notice consistently dry or flooded zones, a sudden spike in your water bill, visible water pooling when the system runs, or sprinkler heads that fail to pop up or retract properly. While minor adjustments like cleaning clogged nozzles are DIY-friendly, several issues require a technician's expertise and specialized equipment.

Uneven coverage within a single zone is one of the most common signs of a problem. If some heads in a zone spray weakly while others have full pressure, you likely have a cracked pipe or fitting underground that is leaking water before it reaches the farther heads. In New Brunswick, this is frequently caused by frost damage from inadequate winterization — even one missed season of blowout can crack PVC fittings and poly pipe connections that sat with residual water through NB's -25°C to -35°C winters. Underground leaks often show up as unusually soft or muddy areas in your lawn when the system runs.

Sprinkler heads that do not fully pop up, stay up after the zone shuts off, or spray erratically indicate either worn internal seals, debris in the mechanism, or insufficient pressure reaching the head. NB's sandy coastal soils and gritty clay soils inland introduce sediment into the system, gradually wearing out seals and clogging nozzles. A head that stays up after the zone shuts off usually has a worn spring or debris preventing retraction — a relatively inexpensive repair at \$15-30 per head installed.

A zone that runs but produces no water from any head typically means a failed solenoid valve (the electric valve that controls each zone). NB's freeze-thaw cycles put enormous stress on valve components, and solenoid failures are common in systems over 5-8 years old. Valve replacement costs \$75-200 per valve including labour. If your controller appears to be sending signals but nothing happens, the wiring between the controller and valves may have been damaged by frost heaving or digging — a professional can test this with a multimeter and trace the wire path.

Water pressure changes across the whole system — either a noticeable drop or increase — warrant professional assessment. Pressure drops may indicate a main line leak, a failing pressure regulator, or a problem with your water supply. Pressure increases (heads misting rather than spraying) can damage components and suggest a failed pressure-reducing valve. NB homes on well water should also check for reduced well capacity during dry summer periods, which can starve an irrigation system.

Professional irrigation repair in New Brunswick typically costs \$150-400 depending on the complexity of the issue. Most straightforward repairs (valve replacement, head replacement, minor pipe repair) can be completed in a single visit. For buried pipe leaks, technicians use listening devices and pressure testing to locate the break without unnecessary digging. If your system is over 15 years old and requiring frequent repairs, a full system assessment

may reveal that targeted upgrades are more cost-effective than continued patchwork repairs.

Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the

<https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Urban Landscaping Ltd ?
- Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?
- Lawrence Landscaping ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Q8

What is the best time of day to water my lawn in New Brunswick?

The best time to water your lawn in New Brunswick is early morning between 5:00 AM and 9:00 AM, when temperatures are cool, wind is typically calm, and evaporation losses are minimal. Watering during this window ensures the maximum amount of water reaches your grass roots rather than being lost to the atmosphere, and it allows the grass blades to dry during the day — which is critically important for disease prevention in NB's already-humid Maritime climate.

Morning watering is especially important in New Brunswick because the province's naturally high humidity (frequently 70-90% during summer mornings along the coast and in river valleys) already keeps grass blades damp with dew until mid-morning. Watering at this time works with the existing moisture cycle — the grass is already wet from dew, so adding irrigation does not extend the wet period. By mid-morning, rising temperatures and increasing air movement dry the grass naturally, minimizing the window when fungal diseases can develop.

Avoid watering in the evening or at night, which is the single most common watering mistake NB homeowners make. When you water after 6:00 PM, grass blades remain wet for 12-14 hours overnight — creating ideal conditions for fungal diseases like brown patch, dollar spot, and the grey and pink snow molds that are already prevalent in NB's Maritime climate. Evening watering during NB's warm, humid July and August nights is essentially creating a perfect disease incubator on your lawn.

Midday watering (11 AM to 3 PM) is not harmful but is wasteful. During a typical NB summer day with temperatures of 25-30°C and moderate wind, up to 30-40% of water sprayed from conventional sprinkler heads

evaporates before reaching the ground. If mid-morning is the only time you can water, it is still far better than evening watering, but you will need to run your system longer to deliver the same effective amount of water. MP rotator-style heads and drip systems lose far less to evaporation than traditional spray heads if midday watering is your only option.

Set your irrigation controller or hose-end timer accordingly. Most programmable controllers allow you to set start times for each zone — program your first zone to begin at 5:00 or 6:00 AM so all zones finish before 9:00 AM. For a typical NB residential system with 4-6 zones running 30-45 minutes each, starting at 5:00 AM means the system finishes by 7:30-8:00 AM. If you water manually with a hose-end sprinkler, consider an inexpensive mechanical timer (\$10-20) that shuts off automatically so you can set it before leaving for work.

During NB's July-August dry periods, water deeply 1-2 times per week rather than briefly every day. Deep morning watering encourages roots to grow deeper into the soil, building natural drought resistance. A lawn watered deeply twice per week at 6:00 AM will always outperform one sprinkled lightly every evening, both in appearance and long-term resilience to NB's variable summer conditions.

Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Urban Landscaping Ltd ?
- Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?
- Leger Steel Roofing ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Q9

How do I set up a rain barrel system in New Brunswick?

Setting up a rain barrel system in New Brunswick is a straightforward and cost-effective way to collect free irrigation water, and it is particularly practical in NB where the province receives 1,100-1,200mm of annual rainfall — enough to keep a properly sized rain barrel system productive from May through October. A basic single-barrel setup costs \$100-300 and can be completed in an afternoon with simple tools.

The most common setup connects a rain barrel to one of your home's downspouts using a **diverter kit**. Choose a downspout that drains a large section of roof — a 1,000 square foot roof section produces approximately 600 litres of water per inch of rainfall, which means a single moderate NB rain event can fill a standard 200-litre barrel. Position the barrel on a raised platform (cinder blocks or a purpose-built stand, 12-18 inches high) to create enough gravity pressure for a garden hose or drip system connection at the bottom. Install a mesh screen over the inlet to keep debris, leaves, and mosquitoes out — mosquito prevention is important during NB's warm summer months.

Essential components include the barrel itself (food-grade plastic is ideal — used wine or olive barrels are popular and available at NB farm supply stores for \$30-60), a downspout diverter (\$20-40), a spigot near the bottom (\$10-15), an overflow outlet near the top connected to a hose that directs excess water away from your foundation, and a screen cover. Pre-made kits with all fittings are available at NB garden centres for \$80-200 and simplify installation considerably.

For NB vegetable gardens, a single 200-litre barrel provides enough water to supplement a small garden (100-200 square feet) for about one week during dry conditions. For larger gardens or to provide a buffer during extended dry spells in July and August, consider linking 2-3 barrels together using overflow connectors so they fill sequentially. A three-barrel system (600 litres total) connected to a drip irrigation system via gravity can sustain a 400-600 square foot vegetable garden through most NB dry spells.

NB-specific considerations are important. Disconnect your rain barrel and drain it completely before freeze-up in late October — water left in the barrel over NB's winter will freeze, expand, and crack plastic barrels. Store the barrel upside down in a garage or shed, or leave it outdoors inverted so it does not collect snow and ice. Reconnect in mid-to-late May after the last frost risk passes. Also be aware that first-flush water from your roof after a long dry spell contains dust, bird droppings, and asphalt granules from shingles — some systems include a first-flush diverter (\$15-30) that sends the first few litres of runoff to waste before clean water enters the barrel.

Rain barrel water is not potable and should only be used for outdoor irrigation, particularly on ornamental plants and garden beds. Avoid watering edible parts of plants directly (like lettuce leaves) and stop using rain barrel water on vegetables 2-3 weeks before harvest as a precaution.

Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Urban Landscaping Ltd ?
- Leger Steel Roofing ?

- [Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?](#)

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Do I need a backflow preventer for my irrigation system in NB?

Yes, a backflow preventer is required for irrigation systems connected to potable water supplies in New Brunswick, and it is strongly recommended even where not explicitly mandated by your specific municipality — it protects your household drinking water from contamination by preventing irrigation water, fertilizers, pesticides, and soil bacteria from being siphoned back into your home's water supply. Backflow can occur when water pressure drops suddenly (from a water main break, fire hydrant use, or pump failure), creating a vacuum that pulls contaminated irrigation water backward through the system.

The most common type used in New Brunswick residential irrigation systems is a pressure vacuum breaker (PVB), which is installed on the main irrigation supply line at least 12 inches above the highest sprinkler head in the system. PVBs are reliable, relatively affordable (\$200-500 installed), and appropriate for most NB residential applications. They work by using a spring-loaded check valve and an air inlet that opens when pressure drops, breaking the siphon effect. The main limitation is that PVBs must be installed above grade, which means they need to be removed or thoroughly drained before NB's winter freeze — leaving a PVB exposed to -25°C temperatures will crack the brass body and destroy the internal seals.

Reduced pressure zone (RPZ) assemblies provide a higher level of protection and are required in some commercial applications and where local bylaws demand them. RPZs can be installed below the highest sprinkler head and offer double-check protection, but they are more expensive (\$500-1,000 installed) and require annual testing by a certified technician (\$75-150). In New Brunswick, RPZ assemblies are typically required for commercial properties and any system that includes chemical injection (fertilizer or pesticide applicators connected to the irrigation system).

New Brunswick's plumbing code and municipal bylaws vary regarding specific requirements. Fredericton, Moncton, and Saint John all have cross-connection control programs that require some form of backflow prevention on irrigation systems connected to municipal water. If you are on a private well, there is no municipal requirement, but installing a backflow preventer is still strongly recommended — contamination of your own well through irrigation backflow can introduce harmful bacteria and chemicals into your household water supply.

When hiring an irrigation installer in New Brunswick, confirm that backflow prevention is included in their quote and ask which type they recommend for your specific situation. A reputable installer will always include appropriate backflow prevention as a standard part of the system design, not as an add-on. If your existing system lacks a backflow preventer, a licensed plumber or irrigation technician can retrofit one for \$200-500 depending on the type and complexity of the installation. Remember that PVB-style preventers must be part of your annual winterization routine — remove them, drain completely, and store indoors from late October through mid-May to prevent freeze

damage.

Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the

<https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- [Urban Landscaping Ltd ?](#)
- [Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?](#)
- [Lawrence Landscaping ?](#)

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Q11

How should I water newly planted trees and shrubs in New Brunswick?

Newly planted trees and shrubs in New Brunswick need deep, consistent watering for their entire first growing season and reduced but attentive watering through their second year, as establishing a healthy root system in NB's variable climate is the single most critical factor in long-term survival. The root ball cannot yet access moisture from surrounding soil, meaning it can dry out even when the rest of your garden appears moist.

During the first 2 weeks after planting, water daily if there is no significant rainfall. Apply water slowly and deeply directly to the root ball and the soil immediately surrounding it — a slow trickle from a garden hose laid at the base of the plant for 15-20 minutes for shrubs and 30-45 minutes for trees is more effective than a quick spray. The goal is to thoroughly saturate the root ball and encourage water to penetrate into the surrounding native soil, enticing roots to grow outward. In NB's sandy coastal soils near Moncton, water drains quickly and you may need to water more frequently; in the heavier clay soils around Fredericton and the Saint John River valley, water less often but check that the root zone is not staying waterlogged.

From weeks 3 through 12 (roughly the rest of the first growing season), water deeply 2-3 times per week if rainfall is insufficient. A general rule is that a newly planted tree needs **10 gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter per watering session** — so a 2-inch caliper maple needs about 20 gallons each time, delivered slowly over 30-45 minutes. Shrubs need proportionally less based on their root ball size. Check soil moisture before watering by pushing your finger 3-4 inches into the soil near the root ball — if it feels dry at that depth, water thoroughly.

Gator bags (slow-release watering bags) are an excellent tool for newly planted NB trees. These 15-20 gallon bags zip around the trunk and release water slowly over 6-8 hours through small pores at the base, providing consistent deep watering without runoff. They cost \$15-30 each and are particularly valuable during NB's July-August dry periods when consistent manual watering is difficult to maintain. Fill them 1-2 times per week depending on rainfall and temperature.

Mulching is essential alongside proper watering. Apply 3-4 inches of shredded bark mulch in a ring extending 2-3 feet from the trunk (keeping mulch 3-4 inches away from the trunk itself). Mulch reduces soil moisture evaporation by 50-70%, moderates soil temperature, and prevents freeze-thaw soil cracking that can damage newly established roots.

Continue attentive watering through the second growing season, reducing to once per week during dry periods. Most trees and shrubs planted in NB are not fully established until their third year, though they require less intervention after the first season. Water deeply in late October before the ground freezes — fully hydrated trees and shrubs are far more resistant to NB's winter desiccation, which kills more newly planted stock than the cold itself.

Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Urban Landscaping Ltd ?
- Leger Steel Roofing ?
- Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Q12

How much does it cost to repair a broken sprinkler line in NB?

Repairing a broken sprinkler line in New Brunswick typically costs \$150-400 for a straightforward repair, though costs can rise to \$500-800 for deeper main line breaks, multiple fracture points, or situations requiring extensive excavation in rocky or heavily landscaped areas. The total cost depends on the pipe type, depth of burial, location of the break, and whether the damage is limited to one spot or extends across a longer

section — all factors heavily influenced by NB's freeze-thaw conditions.

The most common cause of broken sprinkler lines in New Brunswick is freeze damage from inadequate winterization. Water left in pipes during NB's winter (where temperatures regularly reach -25°C to -35°C) expands as it freezes and cracks PVC pipes, splits poly pipe at fittings, and destroys coupling joints. This damage often does not become apparent until the system is activated in spring, when a zone runs but produces little or no water from the sprinkler heads — instead, the water is escaping underground at the break point, often creating a muddy, saturated area in the lawn above the leak.

A typical repair involves three cost components. Diagnosis and leak location usually takes 30-60 minutes (\$75-125) as the technician pressurizes each zone, listens for leaks, and probes for soft or saturated ground indicating the break location. Excavation to expose the pipe adds \$50-150 depending on burial depth — NB irrigation lines should be buried 18-24 inches deep, so reaching the break requires significant digging. Some technicians use specialized listening equipment that can pinpoint breaks without exploratory digging. The actual pipe repair is typically the least expensive part — cutting out the damaged section and splicing in new pipe with compression fittings costs \$25-75 in materials for most residential repairs.

Main line repairs (the pipe from your water source to the zone valves) are more expensive because main lines carry full system pressure, are buried deeper (24-30 inches in NB), and use larger diameter pipe. A main line break can cost \$300-600 to repair. Multiple breaks in the same system — common when winterization was completely skipped — may make it more cost-effective to replace an entire run of pipe rather than patching multiple spots.

To minimize future repair costs, ensure your system is professionally winterized every fall (\$75-150 for the blowout service) — this single annual expense prevents virtually all freeze-related breaks. When repairs are needed, ask your technician to inspect nearby fittings and connections while the trench is open, as cold damage often affects multiple joints in the same area. Use poly pipe rather than rigid PVC for replacement sections, as poly is more flexible and better withstands NB's ground movement from freeze-thaw cycles.

Getting quotes from 2-3 NB irrigation companies is advisable for any repair estimated above \$300. Ensure the quote includes backfilling, compacting the soil, and replacing any sod disturbed during the repair. A reputable company should warranty their repair work for at least one full season.

Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?
- Leger Steel Roofing ?
- Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by New Brunswick Landscaping. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any construction or renovation project. Information is current as of March 22, 2026 and may change. Visit newbrunswicklandscaping.com for the latest answers.