

Underground Sprinklers High On Homeowner's 'Want' List

A survey conducted by U.S. Home and Development Corporation shows that underground sprinklers are high on the preference list of desirable features for new homeowners.

The cross-section of buyers of homes in the \$22,000 to \$26,000 range showed that the sophisticated home buyer of today is more concerned with equipment to provide convenience in the home than with items of pure luxury.

The survey explored in detail the features and equipment viewed with favor by the first and second home buyer. The building industry must know what equipment will motivate the potential buyer to purchase a new home and the existing homeowner to upgrade his present mode of living.

Each housewife was "given" \$2,400 for buying optional extras for her home. The items were priced so that the participant knew exactly how much she was spending from the budget. The five items most frequently specified related to living convenience while luxury items ended far down among the choices.

As might be expected, central air conditioning headed the list with 51.7 of respondents asking for it. The surprise sleeper was the underground sprinkler system, number two on the homeowners' "most wanted" list (42.8% requested it). Other outdoor living equipment, like a dining deck off the kitchen (1.78%) and an outdoor brick barbecue (5.35%), did not get much response. Typical of the luxury items were a Therma-sol steam bath (3.57%) and wall-to-wall carpeting (14.2%).

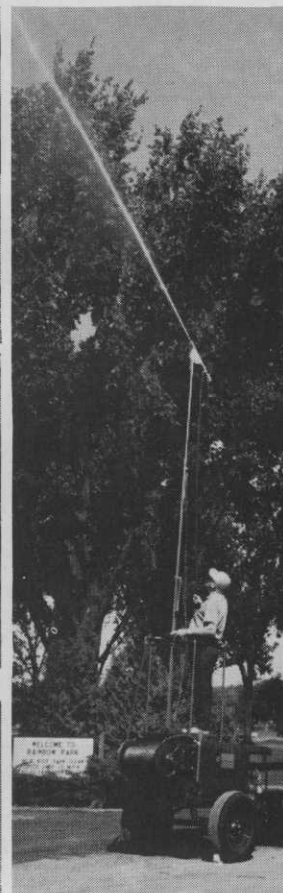
According to Dr. James R. Watson, Jr., director of agronomy for Toro Manufacturing Corporation, producer of Moist O'Matic underground sprinkler systems, the homeowner is interested in sprinklers because more time is spent on hand watering than in any other lawn-care

activity. There are already more than 500,000 home systems in operation today and the number is increasing rapidly, he said.

Automatic underground sprinkler systems have been around for 50 years. However, according to Dr. Watson, the cost has been reduced substantially within the past five years. "New sprinkler heads with

wider coverage and the use of plastic pipe—more effective and longer-lasting than the earlier galvanized, brass or copper piping—have brought systems within reach of every homeowner," he said.

Although the systems still require a major investment, they do increase the value of property and are available for FHA financing. Most systems will run about 10-15 cents a square foot. Prices are determined by the system installed, the local cost of labor, the number of trees and shrubs, the shape of your property, and soil conditions.



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