

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ALERT: Water-Water-Water

Water is the most precious resource in the world. Half of the region's drinking water supply is used outside of the home for watering plants, washing cars and in swimming pools! **HELP YOUR AUDIENCE GET WATER WISE THIS SUMMER!**

The Regional Water Authority and local area water providers are kicking off the second annual **ULTIMATE Water Smart Garden Makeover Contest** aimed at helping local homeowners learn how to save water and money by incorporating water-wise gardening concepts such as drought-tolerant and California native plants and trees into their landscaping. The contest's Grand Prize winner will receive a \$40,000 front yard makeover!



Cheryl Buckwalter of Landscape Liaisons will transform a thirsty yard into an attractive model of water efficiency through a custom water-smart landscape design. Here are some of Cheryl's easy tips to save money and time and be water smart.

- Schedule a Water Wise House Call with your local water provider. A trained water efficiency professional will visit your home free of charge to check your irrigation system and provide a custom watering schedule. They can check indoor plumbing fixtures for leaks and also provide free water-saving materials and devices.
- Cut outdoor water consumption by as much as two-thirds by replacing your

high-water consuming lawn with drought-tolerant plants such as manzanita, sage and rockrose. Use permeable materials such as pavers, stone and mulch for paths. If you want to incorporate lawn into your landscape, consider sizing it appropriately depending upon how you plan to use it. A smaller sized lawn can save time (less lawn to mow) and money (less water used).

REGIONAL WATER EFFICIENCY PROGRAM



CALIFORNIA AMERICAN WATER
CARMICHAEL WATER DISTRICT
CITRUS HEIGHTS WATER DISTRICT
CITY OF FOLSOM
CITY OF LINCOLN

CITY OF ROSEVILLE
CITY OF SACRAMENTO
CITY OF WEST SACRAMENTO
EL DORADO IRRIGATION DISTRICT
ELK GROVE WATER SERVICE

FAIR OAKS WATER DISTRICT
GOLDEN STATE WATER COMPANY
ORANGE VALE WATER COMPANY
PLACER COUNTY WATER AGENCY
RIO LINDA/ELVERTA COMMUNITY
WATER DISTRICT

SACRAMENTO COUNTY WATER AGENCY
SACRAMENTO SUBURBAN WATER
DISTRICT
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FREE Water Wise Tips and Services: rwah2o.org or call us at: 888-WTR-TIPS (888-987-8477)

- Mow your lawn at a height of 2½ to 3 inches to help it develop deeper root systems. Use mulching mowers, or you may be able to change the blade on your lawn mower to a mulching blade to mow your lawn. These mowers finely cut grass and deposit the clippings on the lawn. Clippings decompose quickly, returning valuable nutrients back into the soil.
- Whenever possible, change high-volume spray heads for your lawn to multi-stream rotors which provide water more slowly and uniformly, helping to reduce runoff.
- Visit local plant retailers to learn about and obtain plants suited to the Sacramento region.
- Group plants based on their water requirements (hydrozones) for more efficient watering. Even drought-tolerant plants require an establishment period since root systems have not developed a tolerance to minimal soil moisture, so be sure to water new plantings when they need it.
- Water plants based on their individual needs, soil type, sun exposure, climate and season. Once established, most drought-tolerant plants benefit from deep and infrequent watering.
- Schedule your irrigation system to come on during the early morning hours when temperatures are cooler and there is less wind. This will lessen the amount of water lost to evaporation and decrease the chance of water being carried to undesired locations. Also, peak water demand hours can be avoided.
- Apply a 3- to 4-inch layer of mulch to planting beds and around trees, keeping mulch a few inches away from the bases of plants and trunks of trees. Mulching helps retain soil moisture and reduce germination and growth of weeds. Weeds also compete with desirable plants for water.
- Use low-volume, drip irrigation systems to deliver water where it is needed – to the root zones of plants. Whether emitters are placed on small-diameter tubing (spaghetti tube) or inside tubing (in-line emitters), these fittings deliver water to your plants at an even rate and enable you to control where and how much water is needed. Oftentimes, you can assemble the system yourself or call upon qualified professionals to assist you in its design and installation. System components can be purchased at local irrigation supply companies and retail centers. Include a filter to capture and help prevent sediment from clogging the small openings in drip emitters. Because water pressure varies, a pressure regulator will also help to provide consistent performance of your system.
- Adding a controller to your irrigation system can save you time, money and water. A wide range of models are available. For example, SMART controllers can be programmed with your type of soil, type of plants, etc. The controller then analyzes your micro-climate to develop an irrigation program that fits your landscape's needs based on data gathered from an on-site weather monitor or from satellites! It also automatically and continually adjusts according to changes in weather and how fast the plants and soil lose water.
- No matter what kind of controller you use, you will want to select one that offers multiple programs (minimum of three), multiple start times and day scheduling, and suited to low-volume systems. These features will enable you to water hydrozones separately and to set the time each zone comes on and the days of the week to water. For example, your lawn can be watered at a time and schedule different from planting beds that are on a drip system. By adding a rain sensor, the system will turn off in rainy weather, making your use of water even more efficient. Simply adjusting your watering schedule seasonally as the weather changes will help you save water and money and promote a healthy landscape.
- Visit www.rwah2o.org for more tips about water-efficient landscaping and to learn more about the partners who are generously donating their time and products to the Ultimate Water Smart Garden Makeover Contest.