

splash



FALL 2007

California Natives: Smart and Good-Looking

Landscaping your yard and garden with California native plants is a smart alternative for residents who want to have a beautiful garden and save water and money. These plants—such as native lilac, California redbud, buckwheat, various sages, coffeeberry, Douglas Iris, deer grass, junipers, and penstemons—are already growing in their native environment and are adapted to local weather and soil conditions. Using native or drought-tolerant plants not only saves water, but saves you maintenance time and produces a habitat for native birds, beneficial insects and wildlife.

And with today's emphasis on water conservation and environmental protection, attitudes toward having a large, traditional lawn are changing. The trend is to eliminate lawns or reduce their size. Many residents have removed the lawn from their front yard which were used primarily for decoration, and kept a smaller lawn in the back yard. Replacing lawn with other types of landscaping is a great opportunity to try out native and drought-tolerant plants.

According to the Theodore Payne Foundation, Fall is the best time of year to

plant most natives, especially such water sensitive plants as woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), wild lilac (*Ceanothus* species), and flannel bush (*Fremontodendron* species), and to sow native wildflower seeds. For plants, make sure you dig a good hole, fill it with water, let it drain, place the plant with care, backfill with good soil, and water again. For seeds, rough up the soil surface, sow your seeds, and water. You don't need to add any cover soil; the seeds will do just fine.



Photo courtesy of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Many native plants require more water than usual in the first year to get established, but once they do they need very little maintenance. For more information and great landscaping ideas, visit the Water Conservatory Garden & Learning Center at

the Rio Vista Water Treatment Plant, 27234 Bouquet Canyon Road, Santa Clarita. The garden is open to the public Thursdays through Sundays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Or visit <http://www.theodor-payne.org/> or <http://www.bewaterwise.com/> for more information and planting tips. And remember, California natives are economical, environmentally-friendly, and make for a good-looking garden.

FREE Water-Use Evaluations

Save Water and Money

Do you want to do your part to save water, but you're not sure how? The Los Angeles County Waterworks Districts (Districts) offer customers free in-home water-use evaluation surveys that can help you identify leaks, check your sprinkler system for problems, and provide and install free water-saving devices such as faucet aerators and low-flow shower heads. Customers (including businesses and institutions) can request a free water-use evaluation survey! A Districts representative will visit the site to identify areas where water is being wasted, provide a customized outdoor watering schedule and make recommendations about the most effective ways to save water and bring water bills down. These free surveys help people find sources of waste they never knew existed in their own homes and make it easy to do your part to help save much needed water.

Call or email today to
schedule a
FREE WATER SURVEY!
(888) 987-9473
conserve@waterwise-consulting.com



TIPS: SAVE MONEY AND WATER

- 1 Adjust your sprinklers.** Up to 70 percent of residential water use goes to maintaining our yards. Try taking a minute or two off the timer.
- 2 Check your system.** Do a weekly check for broken or clogged sprinkler heads and replace them right away. Make sure you are watering your yard and not the driveway or sidewalk.
- 3 Fix those leaks.** Just a drip can waste more than 10,000 gallons per month. A leaking flapper on a toilet also increases flows at the water treatment plant.
- 4 Plant native species or drought-tolerant plants.** Many of the lawns and plants we use are not intended for the unique climate in Southern California. Visit your local nursery and ask for native plants that work well in your area.
- 5 Use a broom instead of a hose.** Sweeping up rather than hosing off leaves or grass clippings not only saves water, it reduces runoff.
- 6 Get an adjustable hose nozzle for outdoor use.** That way you can adjust the spray to meet your needs. A hose running for five minutes uses the same amount of water as a 20-minute shower.

Public Input Needed for Upper Santa Clara Water Plan

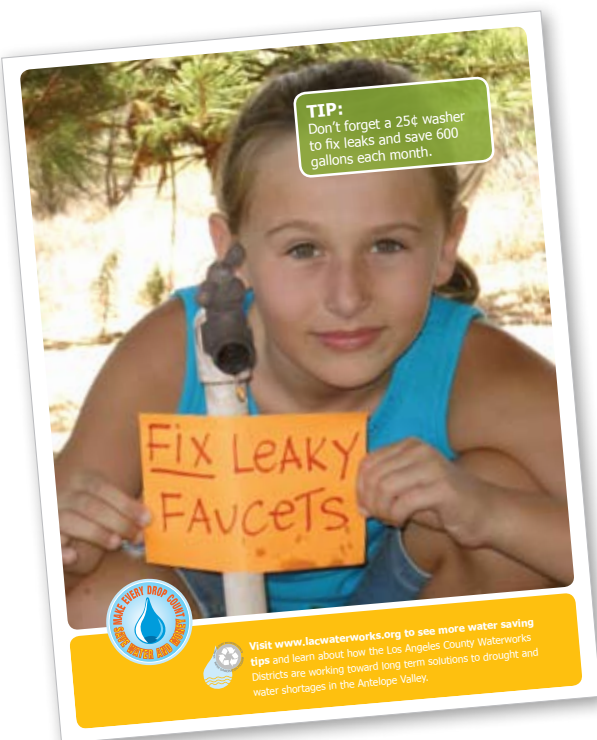
A group of public agencies and other interested parties are working together to develop a Regional Water Plan (Plan) for the Santa Clara River that focuses on water resource management and increases opportunities for State and Federal funding. And they need your input!



The Santa Clara River is the largest river in southern California that remains in a relatively natural state. The river begins above Acton in the San Gabriel Mountains, travels approximately 100 miles west into Ventura County and then empties into the Pacific Ocean. Approximately forty percent of the watershed is in Los Angeles County and 60 percent in Ventura County

Regional collaboration can promote a more efficient, comprehensive, and effective approach to water resource management, and be more responsive to the needs of individual communities along the River. In addition, the state is becoming more oriented toward regional planning, and a Regional Water Plan will help the Upper Santa Clara Region compete successfully for future funding opportunities. Members of the public are welcome to observe and comment during the public comment period at the end of each meeting. Future public meetings will be scheduled to present the Plan, answer questions, and get public feedback.

You can get more information about the Plan, including the schedule for future meetings, at www.scrwaterplan.org or call (626)458-5918.



Mission: "To provide reliable, high-quality water and service at a reasonable cost to all of our customers."

County of Los Angeles
Department of Public Works
P.O. Box 1460
Alhambra, CA 91802-1460
Phone: (626) 300-3362
Email: mbarrett@dpw.lacounty.gov

www.lacwaterworks.org