

# 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 penstemmons—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. Visit <http://www.theodorepayne.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 Evaluation

### 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 evaluations 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 water audit and a District representative will visit the home to identify areas where water is being wasted, provide a customized outdoor watering schedule and evaluate what each household can do to save water and bring water bills down. These surveys help people find sources of waste they never knew existed in their own homes and help the Districts save much needed water.

### FREE WATER SURVEY!

Call **(888) 987-9473** today for a free in-home, water-use evaluation to show you easy ways to save water and money.



## TIPS TO 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.

## Let Us Know

To report water leaks or nuisance water running into the street, call

**(310) 456-6621**

Please provide an address or general location for our Waterworks crews to investigate.

## Frequently Asked Questions ABOUT FLUORIDATION

The Districts purchase the water we provide to Malibu, Topanga and Marina del Rey from the West Basin Municipal Water District. West Basin is a member agency of the Metropolitan Water District (MWD). Beginning October 2007, all water provided by MWD in Southern California will be fluoridated. The following information should be helpful in answering any questions you may have about this change.

### What is water fluoridation?

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral found to be beneficial for teeth. Water fluoridation is when fluoride is added to tap water to levels that will reduce tooth decay.

### What are the benefits of fluoridated water?

More than 50 years of scientific research indicate that people consuming water with fluoride have healthier teeth and fewer cavities. Community water fluoridation is supported by the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization.

### Is fluoridated water harmful to me?

No, fluoridated water is not harmful in the concentration required for improved dental health. The concentration of fluoride in your water will be well below the limit set by the California Department of Health Services and Environmental Protection Agency. If liquid concentrate or powdered infant formula is the primary source of nutrition for an infant in your household or if you use home kidney dialysis equipment, please consult your physician for recommendations.

### What if I am concerned about fluoride in my water?

There is no reason to be concerned about the fluoride in your water. At the low levels that will be added, the fluoride is not harmful and provides dental health benefits.

For more information on fluoride, please visit the following website: <http://www.mwdh2o.com/fluoridation/index.html> or call the MWD Water Quality Information Line at (800) 354-4420.



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

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