



LANDSCAPE CARE GUIDE

FOR PROFESSIONAL LANDSCAPERS



The purpose of this guide is to help you with your business as more customers transform their landscapes from predominately high-water-using turf to water-efficient gardens. Sustainable landscape practices ensure the preservation of our limited water resources and benefit the local environment while providing a beautiful and resilient landscape for residents to enjoy.

Water is a valuable resource and so is the important service you provide. We hope this guide will help improve your professional capacity and knowledge, as well as prepare you to maintain sustainable landscapes.

Homeowners will need your expertise in maintaining drought-tolerant plants sustainably and you can be on the leading edge of healthy landscape care.

SCV Water values your service to its customers.



Access mobile-
friendly version!



IRRIGATION SMART PRACTICES

INSPECT AND TUNE-UP

Turn on each zone using the irrigation controller once a month or each season to make sure it is working properly. This would be a perfect time to talk about updating the irrigation system. Recommend a smart controller to maximize irrigation scheduling effectiveness. SCV Water may have rebates available.

TIME OF DAY

Irrigate early in the morning before the sun rises to maximize the amount of water that remains in the landscape.

TIME OF YEAR

Program the irrigation controller for the hottest summer months. Then, use the “seasonal adjust” program to adjust the runtime to a percentage of the summer program. Winter months might only be 10% to 20% of the runtime of summer.



BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES

- Conserves water
- Improves drought tolerance
- Restores soil health
- Adds biodiversity
- Restores native habitats
- Improves ecosystem health
- Conserves fuel
- Reduces pollution
- Reduces CO₂ levels
- Recycles materials
- Controls stormwater
- Reduces waste to landfill

TIPS FOR TURF

“Cycle and Soak”

“Cycle and Soak” means: Turn on a zone with turf and watch how long it takes until the water starts running off onto the sidewalk or driveway. For example, if it takes 6 minutes before you notice water running off the turf, subtract one minute and that will be the maximum runtime for the tested zone, which is 5.

- If we want to irrigate for 10 minutes, divide into two 5-minute cycles because 5 minutes is the maximum runtime. Therefore, we will need to program two start times before the sun rises.

DRIP EMITTERS

Convert non-turf areas to drip irrigation using drip conversion kits.

- SCV Water may have rebates available.



LA Sanitation
District's Free Mulch



CA Native Plant
Landscaper Certificate
Program (CNPLC)



Naturehood
Webinars



SCV Water Rebates



Rebate Estimator



Homeowner Guide



✉ conservation@scvwa.org
🌐 <https://yourSCVwater.com>

MONTHLY TO-DO LIST

01

JANUARY

- ✧ Pull weeds brought on by recent rains before they go to seed
- ✧ Offer to apply mulch to planter beds that look thin
 - ✧ Try to maintain 3" to 4" of mulch to reduce weeds & conserve moisture
- ✧ Cut back roses the last week of January to five strong stems
- ✧ Keep the garden clean
 - ✧ Prune and cut back overgrown perennials and shrubs

02

FEBRUARY

- ✧ Continue pruning shrubs and trees
- ✧ Prune and cut back perennials and ornamental grasses
 - ✧ Before new growth
- ✧ Continue cleaning garden planter beds
- ✧ Offer to aerate and/or dethatch the lawn (not planter beds)

03

MARCH

- ✧ Check the irrigation system
 - ✧ Inspect sprinklers to see if they're working properly
- ✧ Feed garden with an organic all-purpose plant fertilizer
- ✧ Continue removing cool-season weeds

04

APRIL

- ✧ Prune back herbaceous perennials to promote plant bushiness
 - ✧ For example: Salvia and ornamental grasses
- ✧ Treat soft-bodied pests with insecticidal soap or neem oil
 - ✧ Don't use insecticides in the garden!
 - ✧ Use insecticidal soap or neem oil if you must use something to control soft bodied pests
- ✧ Gopher problem? Plant *Euphorbia rigida* or gopher spurge in the "gopher problem" area, rather than using rodenticides
 - ✧ Euphorbia is mildly toxic so keep away from children and pets

05

MAY

- ✧ Prune spring-flowering shrubs after they finish blooming
 - ✧ Let plants go to seed and the seeds will attract birds to the garden
- ✧ Continue removing pests from garden
- ✧ Weed spotted spurge and purslane before they go to seed
- ✧ Release ladybugs and other beneficial insects to help control aphids, mantis, whiteflies, and other garden pests
 - ✧ Other beneficial insects are nematodes and green lacewings

06

JUNE

- ✧ Check the irrigation system (annual check-up)
- ✧ Control powdery mildew
 - ✧ Remove all infected plant parts and destroy or throw in trash
 - ✧ Spray leaves using 40/60 ratio of milk to water solution in bright sunlight every 7 to 10 days during humid time of the year
- ✧ Keep on top of weeding
 - ✧ Plants shouldn't compete for water, light, and nutrients
- ✧ Deep water big trees once a month through summer

07

JULY

- ⌚ Water mature trees deeply during this dry month
- ⌚ Cactus and succulents are drought tolerant, but many appreciate some water in very hot weather
- ⌚ Mulch garden and vegetable beds to protect them from summer heat, reduce watering needs, and keep the weeds down
- ⌚ Control whiteflies with sticky traps, increase air circulation by thinning out dense branches and/or foliage, and use earth worm castings to discourage them
- ⌚ "Deadheading" faded flowers encourages new blooms

08

AUGUST

- ⌚ Maintain drip irrigation for most effective water use: check for leaks or missing/broken emitters
- ⌚ Prune fruit trees to control height, maintain shape

09

SEPTEMBER

- ⌚ Fertilize for acid-loving plants:
 - ⌚ Beech, willow, oak, dogwood, mountain ash, magnolias, azaleas, mountain heather, rhododendrons, hydrangeas, camellias, daffodils, blueberries, and nasturtiums
- ⌚ As fruit grows on second-year growth, cut back fruited limbs
 - ⌚ Fruit trees that grow on 2nd year wood
 - ⌚ Apples, pears, apricots, European plums, pomegranates



10

OCTOBER

- ✧ Fall is a great time to plant California natives! Offer to plant some when speaking to the homeowner
- ✧ Prepare planting beds for winter
 - ✧ Clear out weeds and rocks
 - ✧ Add soil amendments
- ✧ Add fallen leaves and plant debris to the compost pile, or leave them on the ground to serve as a natural mulch for the garden

11

NOVEMBER

- ✧ Weather permitting, many of the October garden activities can continue into November
- ✧ Remove dead or diseased limbs from trees & shrubs (only remove deadwood, don't prune for aesthetics)
- ✧ Control slugs and snails with an organic, pet/animal & food-safe slug bait

12

DECEMBER

- ✧ Take advantage of the rain we get this month!
- ✧ December is still a great time to plant perennials, shrubs, and trees to get roots established, which will promote lush spring growth
 - ✧ Keep an eye out for frost warnings
 - ✧ Be prepared to cover gardens with a frost blanket for protection
 - ✧ Remove frost blankets during the daytime hours
- ✧ Keep plants watered during this time
- ✧ Clean up the garden – remove excessive leaf litter, etc. – to avoid over-wintering diseases
- ✧ Sow wildflower seeds now for spring color
- ✧ Start planning for the spring garden now!