



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Water Department

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California Friendly Plants: A Smart Alternative

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SAN DIEGO – Summer is the season when most plants are in full bloom – perfect for taking a stroll through your neighborhood park, or any local garden, to admire nature at its best. Summer is also a great time to start collecting ideas for how to create, or improve upon, your own personal outdoor wonderland.

For those of you seeking to do something unique and practical in the garden, why not try California friendly plants? Such water efficient plants can be a smart alternative if you want to have a

beautiful garden and save water and money while you're at it.

From the root system to the leaves and blooms, California friendly plants are designed to thrive in semi-arid climate conditions like San Diego's. Because of this, there are benefits to incorporating them into any landscape.

On many levels, the costs involved with maintaining these drought tolerant plants are much lower. They are often resistant to garden pests, thus reducing the need for pesticides and decreasing harmful runoff to San Diego's waterways. California friendly plants also require less fertilizing, cultivating and irrigation.

Whether plants are low water use or not, they need to be watered efficiently. The difference with California friendly plants is that they use less water than traditional garden landscapes. This is because they are already used to the drier conditions. Lower water usage can equate to lower utility bills.

To assist in selecting California friendly plants, the City of San Diego Water Department, the Water Conservation Garden, and others have developed a list of “Nifty Fifty” plants that are drought-tolerant, attractive, non-invasive, and often available in retail nurseries. The list may be easily downloaded at <http://www.sandiego.gov/water/conservation>.

Several nurseries throughout San Diego County have agreed to stock the Nifty Fifty California Friendly plants, including Armstrong Garden Centers, Buena Creek Gardens, City Farmers Nursery, Kniffings Discount Nurseries, Rancho Jojoba Nursery, and Walter Anderson Nurseries.

A complete listing of nurseries and addresses may be found at the Water Conservation Garden’s website at <http://www.thegarden.org>. Located at Cuyamaca College, the 4½-acre Garden offers an extensive garden of drought-tolerant plants, docent-led tours, and a variety of free classes from landscape design to growing vegetables.

More information about California Friendly plants is also available through the following resources:

- ◆ The Garden Spot at <http://www.bewaterwise.com> offers a large selection of on-line resources to help you transform your outdoor spaces into water-wise showplaces, including gardening classes, garden designs, how-to videos, how-to worksheets, and a searchable plant database.
- ◆ The California Native Plant Society promotes the understanding of California's native flora and the importance its preservation. Visit <http://www.cnps.org> to find out about the San Diego Chapter’s field trips, meetings, plant sales, and other fun activities.

The Water Conservation Program reduces water demand through promoting or providing incentives for the installation of hardware that provides permanent water savings, and by providing services and information to help San Diegans make better decisions about water use. For more information about Water Conservation, visit <http://www.sandiego.gov/water/conservation> or call (619) 515-3500. For more information about Stormwater Pollution Prevention, visit the City’s Think Blue Program website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/thinkblue>.