



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Water Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 30, 2008

CONTACT:

Kurt Kidman

Public Information Officer

(619) 533-4185

kkidman@sandiego.gov

Fall's Top 10: How to Save Water and When

By Luis Generoso, Water Resources Manager, City of San Diego Water Department

SAN DIEGO – Every year it is important to review and change your water usage during the seasonal transitions. With Daylight Savings Time coming to an end on November 2, 2008, now is the perfect time to make sure you are using water wisely.

Although fall arrives in Southern California inconspicuously, some subtle clues revealing this seasonal change are shorter days, cooler temperatures, and changes in leaf colors. With the declaration of a Stage 1 Water Emergency in the City of San Diego, the need to evaluate your water usage is extremely important this year. In a Stage 1 Alert, San Diegans are asked to voluntarily increase their water conservation efforts whenever possible in an effort to avoid the need for mandatory conservation.

Here are 10 guidelines that can help you conserve water this fall season.

1. **Adjust the watering schedule on your irrigation controller.** With the shorter days and less sunlight, plants need less water, even if the weather is still warm. In the fall, an average lawn needs 25 percent less water than during the summer months.
2. **Replace old batteries in your sprinkler/irrigation system.** New batteries will ensure that the system will operate properly and according to schedule.
3. **Water only before 6 a.m. and after 8 p.m., preferably on less windy days.** These darker and cooler hours of the day during the fall are when less evaporation occurs.
4. **Fix sprinklers that waste water.** For example, check water pressure and filters regularly to keep your drip irrigation system in good working order.
5. **Don't water on rainy days.** You can prevent watering while it is raining by installing a moisture sensor to an automatic sprinkler system, or turn the system off when it rains.

6. **Retain moisture in the soil by using mulch.** Mulching also helps to control weeds that compete with plants for water.
7. **Incorporate native and drought-tolerant plants and grasses into your landscapes and gardens to take advantage of less water-dependent vegetation.** Fall is an ideal time for planting. To get ideas for what to plant, visit the Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College or view their website at www.thegarden.org.
8. **Make use of the rain that does fall.** Reposition rain gutters so that runoff from them is directed towards the plants in your landscaped areas.
9. **Cover your pool and spa to reduce water loss due to normal evaporation.** There is usually a decrease in pool and spa use as the weather gets cooler. This will also help to keep it clean.
10. **Remember that during the fall, plants need less water.** Many plants are in their dormant phase and either change color or shed their leaves to prepare for the coming cold weather. These plants don't require as much water as they do during the dry, hot season. Use the City of San Diego Water Department's landscape watering calculator to ensure that you are using the correct amount of water. This resource tool is designed to produce a custom weekly schedule that defines the right amount of water your garden may need according to season and plant type. To create a customized irrigation schedule visit www.sandiego.gov/water/conservation.

Adapt to the seasonal change in water use by following these guidelines. Remember that no matter how pleasant the weather or the season, water conservation is a year-round effort and we need to take a responsible approach to preserving this precious natural resource.

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.