



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Water Department

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Fall Tips You Need to Know on Landscaping and H2O

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SAN DIEGO – When the temperatures begin to get cooler and the winds change, you know that fall is approaching. But even with San Diego’s continued dry spell, residents need to adjust water-use behaviors to respond to varying weather conditions in the fall. Be landscape savvy and familiarize yourself with ways you can make your landscape appropriate for different types of weather conditions. Whether it means designing a fire-smart landscape or adjusting your watering behaviors, there are many ways to make your landscape water-efficient throughout this season.

Following is a list of resources and tips for saving water and preparing your landscape for dry, windy, and even rainy weather:

1. Get a copy of “*A Homeowner’s Guide to Fire & Watershed Management at the Chaparral/Urban Interface.*” Written by Dr. Klaus Radtke, this handbook is designed to provide Southern California homeowners easy to follow tips to prepare landscapes for the fire season, while at the same time helping to save water. The San Diego Fire Recovery Network and the City of San Diego’s Water Conservation Program are partnering to re-publish this resourceful handbook and also make it available in CD format. The handbook and CD will be available to residents, free of charge, by mid-October. For more information, or to get your copy, please contact the City’s Water Conservation Program at (619) 515-3500. In addition, a downloadable version of the handbook will soon be available at www.sandiego.gov/water/conservation.
2. Visit the “*Earth, Wind and Wildfire*” exhibit at the San Diego Natural History Museum opening on Oct. 16. This interactive exhibit is designed to raise awareness of the history and inevitability of fire in Southern California’s arid and diverse wildlands, and to help teach San Diegans how to better prepare for them. For more information on the exhibit, please visit www.sdnhm.org.

3. Water between the hours of 4 p.m. and 9 a.m. preferably on less windy days. Less evaporation occurs during these darker and cooler hours of fall days.
4. Prevent watering on rainy days by installing a rain sensor on your automatic irrigation system.
5. Reposition rain gutters so that runoff from them is directed towards the plants in your landscaped areas.
6. 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. The Water Department also has a list of Native Plants available for downloading on their website at www.sandiego.gov/water/consrvation.
7. Adjust the watering schedule on your irrigation controller. With shorter days and less sunlight, plants need less water, even if the weather is still warm. An average lawn needs 25 percent less water in the fall than during the summer months.
8. Replace old batteries in your sprinkler/irrigation system with new ones to ensure that the system will operate properly and according to schedule.
9. Troubleshoot leaky sprinklers. To prevent wasted water, check water pressure and filters regularly to keep your drip irrigation system in good working order.
10. Retain moisture in the soil by using mulch. Mulching also helps to control weeds that compete with plants for water.
11. 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 according to season and plant type. To create a customized irrigation schedule, visit www.sandiego.gov/water and click on the Landscape Watering Calculator button.

Challenge yourself to minimize outdoor water use this fall season, and see how much you can save by being more attentive to your landscaping needs.

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 www.sandiego.gov/water or call 619.515.3500.