



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Water Department

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Get Your Garden Ready for Fall in Three Easy Steps

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SAN DIEGO – On September 22, 2005, autumn begins in the Northern Hemisphere. If this fact inspires you to cross the celestial equator of your garage and dig out your rusting shovels, then you're on the right track. Autumn is the best time to take stock of your garden and get ready for the months ahead. Cooler temperatures and our normal rainy season usually start in October, making this an ideal time to plant California native and other climate-adapted plants. It's also an important time to make your landscape as fire-safe as possible – especially if you live on the edge of a wildland area. Here are some steps you can take to help you grow a healthy garden, use the right of amount of water, and make your property more fire-defensible:

1. Clean-Up

- ◆ Look for plants that have outgrown their space and need to be divided, thinned or pruned. In particular, clean-up and remove all dry grasses, branches and all other flammable highly flammable materials on your property. Check with your local fire protection agency to learn about regulations in your area. (For City of San Diego residents go to the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's website at www.sandiego.gov/fireandems)
- ◆ Remove weeds and invasive plants. (Visit the California Invasive Plant Council's website at www.cal-ipc.org)
- ◆ Start a compost pile! Most of the green waste from your landscape can be recycled and turned into rich organic compost and mulch for your soil. (Learn more about green waste recycling on the City's Environmental Services Department website at www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services)

2. Add Plants

- ◆ Start an organic vegetable garden to enjoy healthy cool-season treats – try planting lettuce, broccoli, cilantro, peas and carrots.
- ◆ Plant annual fall color flowers and spring blooming bulbs, and order your bare-root roses now.

- ◆ Fall is the best time to plant California native plants. Sow California poppy seeds for a beautiful ground cover in the spring, and enliven your landscape with aromatic sage and colorful California Lilac. (Visit the San Diego Chapter of the California Native Plant Society for upcoming events and information at www.cnpssd.org)

3. Mulch and Maintain

- ◆ Add a 3-4 inch deep layer of organic mulch or compost on all areas of your garden with bare soil. This will conserve water, encourage root growth, and discourage weeds from growing back – imagine never having to pull weeds again!
- ◆ Update your irrigation timer schedule, fix irrigation system leaks, and adjust spray heads to prevent overspray. Did you know that water runoff from irrigation systems is a major cause of water pollution?
- ◆ Take advantage of rebates (\$65 for residential customers with at least 2,000 square feet of landscaping) for “Smart” irrigation timers that automatically adjust themselves throughout the year. Call the San Diego County Water Authority at 1-800-986-4538 (Option 2, 5) for details.
- ◆ Create a free customized watering schedule with the free Landscape Watering Calculator available on our website at www.sandiego.gov/water/conservation.

By doing your part and following these steps, you will create a beautiful garden and do your part to help the environment and save water.

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) 570-1999.

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