

# Sustainable Landscapes

Protect and conserve water with:



Native Landscapes



Rainwater Harvesting



Efficient Irrigation



## Did you know?

A typical San Diego household uses 30 - 50% less water for irrigation with a native landscape.

Sustainable landscapes apply water conservation design techniques to reduce outdoor water use, decrease the need for yard chemicals and minimize the amount of urban runoff that enters the storm drain system.

Replacing sprinklers with drip or micro-irrigation systems can help deliver water directly where it is needed and reduce water waste. Retain rainwater on your property and recharge your groundwater supplies by installing rain barrels or redirecting your rain gutter downspouts toward your landscape. Reduce the size of, or completely eliminate your lawn in favor of native or water-wise plants to minimize outdoor irrigation and reduce the need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

When you switch to a native landscape, apply rainwater harvesting methods and install efficient irrigation systems, you can create a sustainable landscape that is both enjoyable and eco-friendly.



## Native Landscapes

When you transform your front lawn into a native landscape, you are helping to conserve water and reduce storm water pollution, while creating habitat and bringing visual interest to your yard. A typical San Diego household uses more than 50% of its water for irrigation. A home that replaces turf grass with native plants can successfully reduce outdoor irrigation needs by 30-50%. When irrigation requirements are reduced, the potential for urban runoff entering the storm water system is diminished.

Native plants are adapted to survive San Diego's soils and infrequent rainfall, so it is useful to look to Mother Nature to mimic local natural landscapes in your yard. The key to survival of native plant gardens is selecting the right combination of plants that live in similar soil types with complementary watering needs. Native plant lists are available from California Native Plant Society, San Diego Chapter ([cnpssd.org/horticulture](http://cnpssd.org/horticulture)) and The Water Conservation Garden ([thegarden.org/waterwise](http://thegarden.org/waterwise)).

The City of San Diego is encouraging water-efficient landscapes with turf grass replacement incentives to reduce irrigation and urban runoff at homes and businesses. To learn more, City of San Diego Public Utilities customers can visit: [sandiego.gov/water/conservation](http://sandiego.gov/water/conservation).

## Rainwater Harvesting

An easy way to both conserve water and reduce the amount of runoff entering the storm drain system is to capture rainwater from your roof using a rain barrel or cistern. **Rain barrels** connect to a home's rain gutter downspout and are designed to temporarily store rain water flowing from the roof to help irrigate gardens and landscaping. **Cisterns** are larger rainwater storage tanks and can be located either above or below ground. Cisterns are typically for commercial use due to their large size, but can easily be installed at a residence.

A standard rain barrel system consists of a rain gutter and downspout, a storage container, a locking lid and screen grate (to keep out debris and insects), an overflow pipe, and an outlet faucet. From the outlet faucet you can either collect your stored water using a watering can or connect it to a gravity-feed system of irrigation hoses that carry the water to your landscaping or garden. If your downspout is connected to an underground pipe you are losing valuable water that can be harvested for your watering needs.

The City of San Diego is encouraging downspout disconnection with incentives for installation of rainwater harvesting devices. To learn more, City of San Diego Public Utilities customers can visit: [sandiego.gov/water/conservation](http://sandiego.gov/water/conservation).



## Efficient Irrigation

An efficient irrigation system can reduce outdoor water use and ensure plants receive the right amount of water for their needs. **Drip** or **micro-irrigation** systems use less water than conventional sprinklers by delivering water slowly and directly to your plants. No water is lost to wind, runoff or evaporation. In addition, you can add additional hoses or drip emitters to ensure thirstier plants receive the water they need without overwatering others.

**A Weather Based "Smart" Irrigation Controller** can adjust your irrigation system's watering schedule according to changing weather conditions. Some smart controllers use sensors to directly detect warm temperatures or current rainfall, while others use weather data from a local weather station to automatically adjust watering times. A home that has replaced existing sprinklers and timers with more efficient micro-irrigation and smart controllers have successfully reduced their outdoor irrigation needs by up to 20%.

The City of San Diego is encouraging use of Smart Controllers and Micro-irrigation with replacement incentives to reduce over-irrigation at homes and businesses. To learn more, City of San Diego Public Utilities customers can visit: [sandiego.gov/water/conservation](https://sandiego.gov/water/conservation).



## Rebates & Incentives

A water-efficient landscape and irrigation system can reduce outdoor water use and minimize the amount of urban runoff that enters the storm drain system. The City of San Diego is working to help customers conserve water by offering rebates to help you create a sustainable landscape at your home or business.

For current rebate information, visit:

City of San Diego Water Conservation:  
**[sandiego.gov/water/conservation](https://sandiego.gov/water/conservation)**

San Diego County Water Authority:  
**[sdcwa.org/conservation](https://sdcwa.org/conservation)**

SoCal Water Smart:  
**[socialwatersmart.com](https://socialwatersmart.com)**

## Questions?

**(619) 533-4126**

Email: [waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov](mailto:waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov).

Website: [sandiego.gov/water/conservation](https://sandiego.gov/water/conservation)





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