

City of South Pasadena

Want to Save Water in Your Garden? **Plant Native and Drought Tolerant Plants!**

Introduction

South Pasadena uses approximately 5,000 acre-feet (1.6 billion gallons!) of water each year, most of which is pumped from underground aquifers. To meet this high demand of water, the City is sometimes also required to purchase additional water from the Metropolitan Water District, which imports water from almost 400 miles away. With ongoing water shortages in California, the cost of imported water has increased dramatically over the last several years and costs continue to rise. To counter the prolonged drought and recent restrictions on imported water, the Governor signed Senate Bill 7 in November 2009 requiring Californians to achieve a 10% reduction of water use by 2015 and a 20% reduction by 2020.

According to the *California Landscape Task Force*, nearly 50% of all of our water is used outdoors in our gardens and landscapes. Some great first steps that consumers can take to meet the state's reduced water usage requirements are to inspect and fix any broken and inefficient irrigation systems, and to reduce sprinkler watering to two days a week or less. Another important strategy is to replace unused turf and grass lawn areas with low-water use native and drought tolerant plants.

This short pamphlet, sponsored in part by the South Coast Air Quality Management District's Local Government Match Tree Partnership Program, provides information on steps you can take to transform your garden to save water and money. For additional water saving tips please visit <http://www.ci.south-pasadena.ca.us/publicworks/index.html>

Go Native! What are native and drought tolerant plants?

Although native and drought tolerant plants are often thought of as cactus and succulents, in our part of Southern California, they are more accurately described as plants from sage scrub, chaparral and oak woodland plant communities. These plants require very little supplemental water once established because they are so well adapted to our local climate. Native and drought tolerant plants include a wide assortment of trees, shrubs, perennials, groundcovers and wildflowers that come in all sizes, shapes, scents and colors. Many are beautiful, lush and verdant plants that make wonderful landscape specimens and are available at local nurseries. One note of caution, some drought tolerant plants from other parts of the world can become weeds in our wildlands. Great alternatives to invasive plants like ivy and vinca are widely available. Visit <http://www.ci.south-pasadena.ca.us/publicworks/index.html> for more information.

What are the benefits of native and drought tolerant plants?

Native and drought tolerant plants are beneficial to the environment and provide many advantages to homeowners. As mentioned, they can survive and flourish with much less water than most exotic plants. For instance, UC Verde Buffalo Grass requires 75% less water than traditional turf grasses.

Native and drought tolerant plants require less fertilizer and pesticides, making them easier to maintain and sustainable choices for the garden. Well-planted native gardens can also generate less green waste. An added benefit is that newly transformed garden will attract beneficial wildlife like hummingbirds, songbirds and butterflies.

And don't forget, these plants are good for the pocket book too! Growing native and drought tolerant plants can decrease your water bill and if you replace your lawn with more drought tolerant varieties,

you may be eligible for a rebate of \$1 or more per square foot of turf removed. More information on rebate programs can be found at <http://www.ci.south-pasadena.ca.us/publicworks/index.html>

What kind of climate does South Pasadena have?

South Pasadena has a Mediterranean climate, consisting of cool, wet winters and hot, dry summers. Our region is categorized as Sunset climate zone 21, denoting mild winter temperatures that rarely fall below 30°F. South Pasadena receives an average of 21 inches of rainfall each year, predominantly in the months of January, February and March. However, our region receives little to no rain during the dry season, which can last up to 7 or 8 months. This makes it necessary to constantly irrigate many turfgrass and exotic plant varieties to make up for the shortage of rainfall. According to the American Horticultural Society, South Pasadena experiences approximately 90 to 120 days per year with temperatures over 86°F, the temperature at which most plants begin to suffer damage from heat. Therefore it is advantageous to introduce plants into your garden that are adaptable and thrive in our environment year-round.

How do I care for these plants?

Although each plant has different needs, here are some general tips to care for native and drought tolerant plants:

- Plant native and drought tolerant plants in the winter. The cooler temperatures and moist soils allow the plants to establish deep root systems and give them a better chance of survival.
- Group plants with similar water needs to prevent overwatering.
- Use thick layers of organic mulch or pea gravel to prevent weeds and to keep water from evaporating from the bare soil.
- Give plants sufficient space to grow so they each receive ample water and nutrients and so that their roots and branches can expand. This will also reduce the need to prune frequently.

Suggested Plant Species

Below are a few of the wide variety of native and drought tolerant plants available. More recommended plants species can be found at <http://www.ci.south-pasadena.ca.us/publicworks/index.html>

<u>Trees</u>	coast live oak Engelmann oak island oak valley oak
<u>Shrubs</u>	Bush anemone Coffeeberry Concha California Lilac toyon western redbud

Resources for Additional Information

For more information on design and care of native and drought tolerant landscapes refer to the following books:

“California Native Plants for the Garden” by Carol Bornstein, David Fross and Bart O’Brien

“Landscape Plants for California Gardens” by Robert C. Perry

“Care and Maintenance of Southern California Native Plant Gardens” by Bart O’Brien, Betsey Landis and Ellen Mackey

Classes on native and drought tolerant garden design and maintenance are offered by:

The Theodore Payne Foundation: <http://www.theodorepayne.org/>
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden: <http://www.rsabg.org/>
Tree of Life Nursery: <http://www.californianativeplants.com/>
California Native Plant Society: <http://www.cnps-sgm.org/>

There are many great gardens in our region that feature native and drought tolerant plants:

- South Pasadena Nature Park
Pasadena Avenue, South Pasadena (east of the York Street Bridge)
- Arlington Garden
295 Arlington Drive, Pasadena
- Charles F. Lummis Home and Garden
200 E. Avenue 43, Los Angeles
- Descanso Gardens
1418 Descanso Dr., La Canada Flintridge
- Los Angeles Arboretum and Botanic Garden
301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia
- Crescenta Valley Water District Demonstration Garden
2700 Foothill Blvd., La Crescenta
- Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden
1500 N. College Ave., Claremont

For additional demonstration gardens, visit <http://www.bewaterwise.com/gardens2visit.html>

Local Nursery Locations

<http://bewaterwise.com/retailers.html>

Gardening Guides

<http://www.gettingnative.com/>
<http://www.weedingwildsuburbia.com/>
http://bewaterwise.com/first_step01.html
<http://www.cnps.org/cnps/grownative/>

Local Garden Societies

California Native Plant Society – San Gabriel Mountain Chapter
<http://www.cnps-sgm.org/>
Mediterranean Garden Society
<http://www.mediterraneangardensociety.org/>
San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society
<http://www.sgvcss.com/>

Invasive Plants

<http://www.plantright.org>
<http://www.cal-ipc.org/landscaping/dpp>