Sustainable Conservation

BEYOND DROUGHT-TOLERANT

A California Low-Water Gardening Guide from Sustainable Conservation

WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE

This low-water gardening guide gives anyone with a yard or garden the information and resources to know what plants, tools, and landscaping options to choose right now to save water, time, and money for years to come. It is not intended to be the only resource you use, but it will help you come up with ideas to have both a beautiful landscape or garden and one that is water-efficient.

BY READING THIS GUIDE, YOU'LL LEARN 5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW TO HAVE A GREAT, LOW-WATER GARDEN, INCLUDING:

1. Why to make your garden low-water friendly
2. How to arrange your garden for efficient water use
3. Which variety of plants are best suited for your specific garden
4. What simple tools you can use to make low-water gardening easier
5. Ten steps to take right now to easily improve your water use

Plus, we've included nearly 30 extra resources you can use to continue your journey to building a sustainable, water-efficient garden.

Photo credit: Saxon Holt

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....5

CHAPTER 1
WHY MAKE YOUR GARDEN SUSTAINABLE?.....7

CHAPTER 2
ARRANGE YOUR GARDEN FOR EFFICIENT WATER USE.....11

CHAPTER 3
CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLANTS FOR YOUR YARD.....17

CHAPTER 4
SIMPLE TOOLS TO MAKE LOW-WATER GARDENING EASIER.....21

CHAPTER 5
TEN STEPS TO TAKE NEXT.....25

ABOUT SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION.....30

Photo credit: FarOutFlora.com

INTRODUCTION

What makes a garden drought-friendly? It's more than simply reducing water use: it's creating a sustainable landscape appropriate for your climate.

According to the California Urban Water Conservation Council, sustainable landscaping transcends water-use efficiency to reflect a site's climate, geography, and soils and helps reduce costs, runoff, green waste, need for pesticides and fertilizer, greenhouse gas emissions, and also improves habitat.

In this guide, you'll learn about using sustainable landscaping practices to create a garden with water use that is appropriate for any climate, especially California's.

CHAPTER 1

WHY MAKE YOUR GARDEN SUSTAINABLE?

California's water has been working overtime! Many years of groundwater pumping that exceeds annual replenishment and periods of drought have depleted our most precious resource. Making our yards and gardens sustainable and water-efficient is an easy way for us to take a stand and make a big impact in the fight to save our water.

We can't live without using water to hydrate us and grow our food, but lawns and gardens are less essential. Gardens can offer respite and visual pleasure, and help cool our cities. Creating gardens that are well adapted to the local climate can provide the same benefits with far less water.

It may surprise you to learn that about half of California's urban water use is outdoors, largely for watering landscapes, and about 70% of that use is residential. That means more water for food, farming, and hydration. And that means that if you have a lawn or a yard, you can make a difference, today, for the rest of the state!

There are more personal benefits as well. Sustainable gardening

A SANTA MONICA STUDY SHOWED A SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE TOOK ONLY 15 HOURS OF YARD WORK FOR EVERY 80 HOURS PUT INTO A TRADITIONAL LANDSCAPE!

often requires less maintenance, costs less, and can create spectacular, eye-catching displays of native and other plants and flowers that are attractive and beneficial for local wildlife. By paying closer attention to how we personally use water outdoors, we're not only ensuring California's most precious resource is protected for generations to come, we're also beautifying our landscapes with plants that are best suited for where we live. This strategy saves water, time, and money.

SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION RECOMMENDS FOUR MAIN PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE GARDENING:

1. Gardening where you are with the right plant for the right place.
2. Using highly efficient irrigation only when necessary.
3. Building healthy living soil.
4. Capturing rainwater as a resource.

In this low-water gardening guide, we will focus on gardening where you are with the right plants for your climate, and using efficient irrigation, and we will offer resources for the other two principles as well.

Not only are these principles useful for you in maintaining a sustainable, climate-friendly garden—they are central to our work across the state as well because they are essential to a healthy environment and habitat for all of California.

Sustainable Conservation's focus on groundwater conservation, invasive plant sale reduction, efficient irrigation for farming, and water quality protection are all key to our mission: **helping California thrive by uniting people to solve the toughest challenges facing our land, air, and water.**

Photo credit: Paolo Vescia

"Sustainable Conservation not only challenges major industries to help California's environment and people thrive. They lead in showing how to do so in a way that makes good business sense."

—JOHN KELLER, VICE PRESIDENT OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH, MONROVIA

CHAPTER 2

ARRANGE YOUR GARDEN FOR EFFICIENT WATER USE

Every yard is different. Every yard is its own watershed, a kind of tiny habitat separated from other yards by how water flows across and drains through it—which is partly up to you!

Every yard even has its own microclimates, slopes and hills, grass and plant history, soil makeup, and generally, different amounts of sun, shade, and water in different areas. In converting your yard to a low-water friendly garden, you will want to take advantage of all of these by creating hydrozones.

A hydrozone is a section of your yard or garden where plants with similar water needs are grouped together. This way, you can tailor the amount and frequency of irrigation (or none at all) and avoid overwatering plants that need less. This can be done in a small space on level land, where you might have a single hydrozone, with plants that all have similar water needs.

Hydrozoning is especially useful in yards with varying degrees of slope, drainage, variation in the soil, or amount of sun. In this case, to minimize water use and maximize plant health, you would place plants with lower water needs in the areas that will have longer sun exposure and less (or no) supplemental irrigation.

FOR MORE INFO

Grouping Plants into Hydrozones

Hydrozone Landscaping Brochure

Plants that need more water might go in areas with partial shade, where the moisture will be retained longer. And lower elevation areas or areas where runoff collects are great spots for plants that need, or can tolerate, wet soil. Otherwise you would need to manage the watering of specific individual plants, likely resulting in overwatering others—and that's what we want to reduce!

If you were creating a brand-new low-water garden, choosing plants appropriate for your climate—that is, plants that would thrive with naturally occurring rain and very little supplemental watering—would create a thriving garden with minimal maintenance and extra water needed.

SWALE

A swale is a low tract of land, especially one that is moist or marshy. The term can refer to a natural landscape feature or a human-created one. Artificial swales are often designed to manage water runoff, filter pollutants, and increase rainwater infiltration.

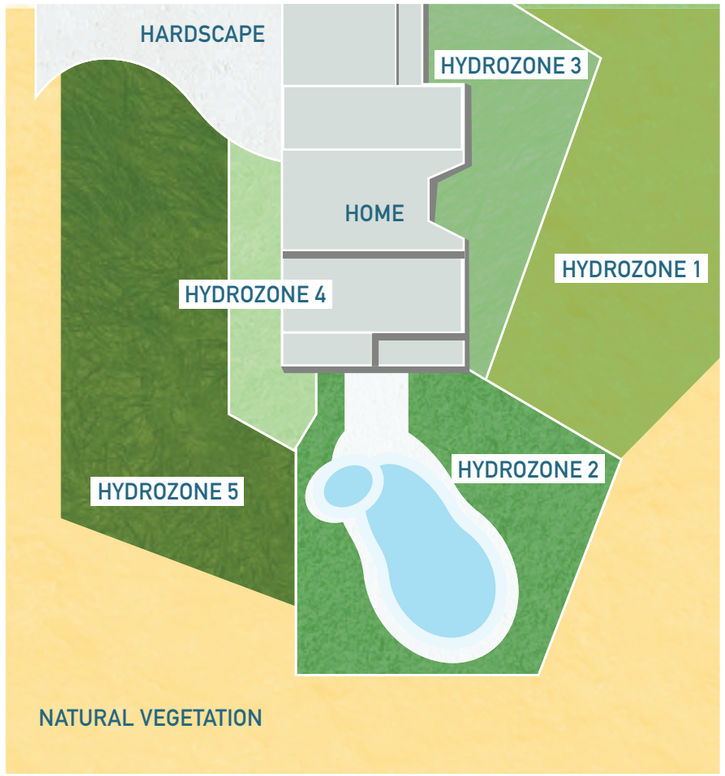
Keep in mind that plants that require more water may still have a useful role in your garden—in the right location! They can thrive in low areas where water naturally collects, in a **swale** that you create to capture water to diminish run-off, or near streams or ponds.

TO DIVIDE YOUR YARD INTO VARIOUS HYDROZONES, START WITH THIS APPROACH: Draw a simple sketch of your yard, separating out the major areas and features you have or would like to have.

Start with the basics: Groundcover plants, especially ones planted as lawn substitutes, should be zoned separately from planting beds, because they will likely require less water from most plants in beds. Trees and shrubs generally need deep watering less frequently and should be in their own zone. If you plan on adding specific plants that require higher amounts of water, such as roses, group these together in a way that makes irrigation easy and efficient. If you plan to include a section of lawn, consider limiting it to where you will most enjoy it and can meet its higher water requirements more easily.

Ideally, you won't need to irrigate at all. But you should plan to irrigate each zone individually, whether that's via a rain collection system or a graywater system.

Creating Hydrozones at Home



HYDROZONE 1
Sloped area, full sun—plants with lowest water needs

HYDROZONE 2
Mostly full sun; some foot traffic; turfgrass alternatives.

HYDROZONE 3
Closest to house, so plants most visible; partial sun; cluster plants with higher water needs.

HYDROZONE 4
Close to house and entry; full sun; lower elevation, so some runoff/drainage collects here; use plants that can tolerate more water, less well-drained condition; good location for a deciduous tree for summer shade.

HYDROZONE 5
Full sun, further from entry; use taller, lower maintenance plants with minimal water needs.

Before you consider irrigation, and even if you already have an irrigation system, make sure you read our section on efficient irrigation.

Giving plants the right amount of water—not too little, not too much—keeps them looking their best. **Dividing your yard into hydrozones is the first step to creating a drought-tolerant, low-water garden, wherever you live.**

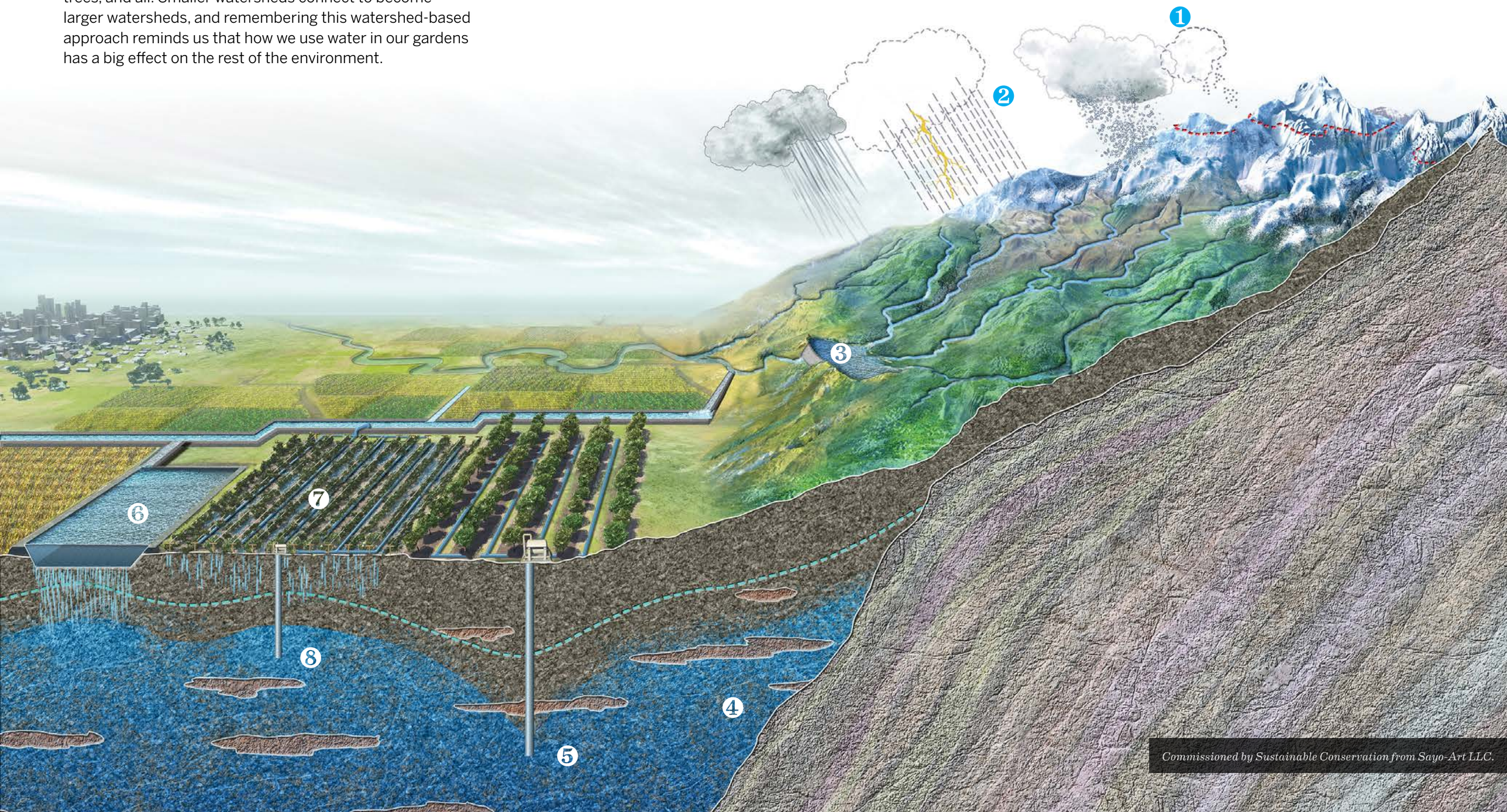
WHAT IS A HYDROZONE?

A hydrozone is a section of your yard or garden with groups of plants that require similar amounts of water.

What Is a Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that water, such as rain or melted snow, flows through, including water that runs underground or downhill into a stream, river, lake, or ocean. Watersheds are conventionally separated by mountain ranges and can be as large as the San Joaquin Valley, but every watershed is made up of many micro-watersheds, such as your local park's pond—or your own yard, soil, trees, and all. Smaller watersheds connect to become larger watersheds, and remembering this watershed-based approach reminds us that how we use water in our gardens has a big effect on the rest of the environment.

As the annual snowpack in the Sierra Nevada diminishes ❶, rain unleashed by increasingly volatile storm events ❷ will run quickly off the land and be difficult to capture. As dry years deplete freshwater available in our rivers, lakes, and reservoirs ❸, we need to keep surface flows in place for fish and other aquatic species. Hidden beneath our feet, groundwater ❹ holds our best hope for a sustainably hydrated California. During wet years, the avoidance of over-pumping ❺, and capture of floodwater on fields through dedicated recharge basins ❻ and within active cropland ❼, will allow groundwater levels to recover ❽.



Commissioned by Sustainable Conservation from Sayo-Art LLC.

"Employing sustainable design theory and selecting low-water, non-invasive plants for home landscapes will enhance future environmental quality—especially when plantings also provide food and habitat for native birds and insects."

—ELLEN ZAGORY, DIRECTOR OF HORTICULTURE AT THE UC DAVIS ARBORETUM AND PUBLIC GARDEN, PLANTRIGHT PLANT LIST COMMITTEE MEMBER

Photo credit: Katie Hetrick for UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden

CHAPTER 3

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLANTS FOR YOUR YARD

What makes a plant "drought-tolerant?"

We often think of a drought-tolerant plant as something like a cactus—a plant that can tolerate nearly year-round lack of water. Alternatively, when we have plants that require watering, we often think of these as not "drought-tolerant." But there is a more practical way to select plants that can thrive with little to no supplemental watering in your garden.

Plants

The first step in creating a low-water garden is to garden with plants that are appropriate to your regional climate, because plants that are adaptable to typical rainfall patterns in your area will flourish with much less water and work on your part. Start by finding your climate zone, and then create a list of plants you'd like based on what's appropriate to your region.

Many beautiful low-water plants grow and thrive in summer-dry climates—not just cacti!—and they can add color, interest, and variety to our gardens. Plants such as turfgrass and tropical plants often depend on more water than is naturally available in the dry, Mediterranean climate in much of California and the West.

Ribes sanguineum var. *glutinosum*. Photo credit: FarOutFlora.com

Planting a mixture of native shrubs, grasses, and perennials will help you use less water, and create a landscape beneficial for local wildlife. But remember: all plants need additional water until they are established. Fall is the best time to plant in California due to the usually abundant rainfall. Remember this with the popular slogan—"Fall Into Planting"!

Also, watch out for invasive plants that may be drought-tolerant but can be garden bullies outside their natural range. These can create havoc not just for your garden, but for natural areas around you, where invasives can destroy wildlife habitat, clog streams, and create fire hazards. Read more about the dangers of invasive plants and find beautiful alternatives at PlantRight.org.

GROUNDCOVER		
HIGH WATER—AVOID IN MUCH OF CALIFORNIA	**ALTERNATIVES**	**ALTERNATIVES**
Creeping bentgrass *Agrostis palustris*	Molate fescue *Festuca rubra*	Blue grama grass *Bouteloua gracilis*
Kentucky bluegrass *Poa pratensis*	Buffalo grass *Buchloe dactyloides*	Clustered field sedge *Carex praegracilis*

SHRUBS		
HIGH WATER—AVOID IN MUCH OF CALIFORNIA	**ALTERNATIVES**	**ALTERNATIVES**
Azaleas *Rhododendron spp*	Flannel bush *Fremontodendron*	Salvia 'Hot Lips' and other low water cultivars *Salvia microphylla*
Camellia *Camellia japonica*	Ceanothus 'Ray Hartman' *Ceanothus Ray Hartman*	Pink-flowering currant *Ribes sanguineum*
Gardenia *Gardenia spp*	Grevillea *Grevillea paniculata* and *Grevillea olivacea*	Western redbud *Cercis occidentalis*

Trees

Trees can also add great value to your landscape, and their shade can help keep your house cooler in the summer. And while they need water for a few years to get established, they will eventually help prevent erosion, reduce water needs in your garden, and reduce your air conditioning needs. Be sure to select a tree that, when it reaches maturity, will be the right size for your space.

Many western species of maple, dogwood, box elder, alders, aspens, and willows that need more water are still worth including in your yard, particularly if they can be sited in locations that have more water, such as near creeks or low spots.

A SELECTION OF WESTERN TREES THAT HAVE LOW-WATER NEEDS*:

- *Arbutus* 'Marina' (Strawberry tree)
- *Arbutus menziesii* (Pacific madrone)
- *Cassia leptophylla* (Gold medallion tree)
- *Cercidium floridum* (Blue palo verde)
- *Chilopsis linearis* (Desert willow)
- *Cotinus obovatus* (Smokewood tree)
- *Lyonothamnus floribundus* (Catalina ironwood)
- *Parkinsonia* 'Desert Museum' (Desert museum palo verde)
- *Pinus monophylla* (Singleleaf pine)—and other native pines
- *Quercus agrifolia* (Coast live oak)—and many other native oak species: *Quercus chrysolepis* (Canyon live oak), *Quercus engelmannii* (Engelmann oak), *Quercus kellogii* (California black oak), *Quercus palmeri* (Palmer's oak), *Quercus tomentella* (Island oak)
- *Umbellularia californica* (California bay laurel)

**from the GreenGardensGroup.com*

Photo credit: UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden

CHAPTER 4

SIMPLE TOOLS TO MAKE LOW-WATER GARDENING EASIER

The most important resource you'll need for your garden: water! When you begin to think of water itself as the rare, valuable resource that it is, you will begin to understand why low-water gardening is so important. To ensure you use water as efficiently as possible, here are some tips and tools to use as you create your new low-water yard.

Soil should be a sponge that collects and stores water. Unfortunately, many of our yards have soil that's more like a brick—water flows across it, instead of through it. Without building living, un-compacted soil, water conservation efforts will be for naught. To test your soil's permeability, you don't need any tools—just dig a hole somewhere central about one foot deep and six inches wide. Fill the hole with water and time how long it takes to drain, twice.

The ideal time frame is under 30 minutes to completely drain, both times. If it's any more than this, you may want to help your soil out with one of the resources at the end of this guide.

THINK ABOUT WATERING NEW PLANTS FOR:

- 30 minutes 3x/week for month 1
- 30 minutes 2x/week for month 2
- 30 minutes 1x/week for months 3-6
- Move to 30 minutes every 2 weeks and for some plants, eventually no supplemental watering.

Use highly efficient irrigation, and only when necessary. If it's possible in your area, irrigate with water collected via a rain collection device or a graywater system. New plants will require additional watering for the first year, but after that, your low-water garden should generally require watering at most twice per month, and only during the driest season.

The type of irrigation you use should depend on which area of the garden your plants are in. If you have clustered plants with similar water needs and similar conditions together, you can easily adjust the amount of water each area receives, and you may choose different irrigation equipment or methods as well.

Hand-watering with a hose is often the most efficient method—but if you are interested in timed, or automated watering devices, consider this: stationary automated sprayhead irrigators with standard nozzles that create a fine mist often produce more water than most soil can accept, and must be timed appropriately. Generally, drip irrigators or rotating sprayhead nozzles are the most efficient options for California landscapes. Schedule your irrigation at sunrise or sunset, because soil absorbs the most water when the temperature is lower. And remember: all irrigation methods are inefficient if used incorrectly!

Your Sustainable Garden Checklist

TAKE THIS SIMPLE LIST WITH YOU WHEN YOU PURCHASE YOUR GARDENING SUPPLIES.

Here are the basics for manual, low-water gardening. These should do the job for most small yards.

ITEM	WHY YOU'LL WANT ONE	ESTIMATED COST	WHAT TO LOOK FOR
☐ **Screwdriver**	Push this into your lawn—if it goes in easily for several inches, don't water.	$5	Anything!
☐ **Broom**	Clean your driveway or sidewalk between rain showers with this instead of a hose.	$10	Anything!
☐ **Sprinkler timer**	Turn on or shut off your sprinkler after a set amount of time with this simple item.	$15—$50	Simple, dial-based timers often work as well as digital ones
☐ **Rain gauge**	Measure the water your lawn gets from rainfall, to let you know whether or not to water.	$20—$50	These range from decorative to plain - look for one that's easy to read
☐ **Rain chains**	Replace your downspout with a simple chain to channel water, reducing erosion.	$5—$50	Copper won't rust, but will cost more!
☐ **Gutter diverters**	Divert water from the downspout to an area of plants with higher water needs or rain barrel.	$15—40	Talk with a staffperson at your preferred home improvement store.
ADVANCED ITEMS—THESE ARE USEFUL FOR LARGER YARDS OR AREAS THAT WILL REQUIRE IRRIGATION.			
☐ **Soil aerator**	Punch holes in your lawn to keep it spongy.	$20	For a small yard, a sturdy, two- or four-spike aerator should be sufficient.
☐ **Rain barrel**	Save water from your downspout.	$15 to build, $75—$200 to buy	Contains a screen, is easy to drain and easy to add mosquito larvicide pellets.
☐ **Rain shut-off device**	Eliminates unnecessary watering during rain and can be installed on existing sprinklers.	$15—$50	Talk with a staffperson at your preferred home improvement store.
☐ **Soil moisture probe**	Manual or automatic options can measure soil moisture, and even shut off irrigation.	$15—$50	Look for the EPA "WaterSense" symbol on automatic versions.
☐ **Smart controller**	Tell your sprinkler what to do based on local weather conditions.	$50—$200	Look for the EPA "WaterSense" symbol.

CHAPTER 5

TEN STEPS TO TAKE NEXT

(plus nearly 30 additional resources to continue learning)

Whether you plan to completely redo your yard or just convert it slowly to a more water-efficient garden, follow these steps to quickly save time, money, and water.

1. Mulch–Apply 3-4" of mulch around valuable, water-stressed plants you want to keep. Prominent shade trees or shrubs are great examples. This minimizes water loss due to evaporation and reduces the need for irrigation by up to 50%!
2. Weed–Remove invasive plants and weeds encroaching on shrubs, vegetables, and flowers. These outcompete native and cultivated plants for water and nutrients.
3. Sweep–When cleaning driveways, sidewalks, and steps, use a broom. When cleaning where water is necessary, use a bucket instead of a hose.
4. Schedule–Time your irrigation appropriately. Sprinklers should run for about 10 minutes, then be off for about 10 minutes to let water fully absorb into the soil. This is not necessary for drip irrigation, which will need to run longer due to the slow rate it releases water but doesn't need to be staggered.
5. Sink In–Where possible, replace concrete surfaces with permeable brick, stone, or gravel for areas with no plants. This helps your garden capture rainfall for underground aquifers rather than sending it into storm sewers.

6. Aerate—Adding holes to your lawn keeps it moisture-absorbent and healthy.
7. Compost—A compost bin or pile will help you add healthy, organic matter to your garden. Organic matter helps keep soil spongy and able to retain water.
8. Test—Use a screwdriver, soil moisture probe, or smart controller to only water when absolutely necessary.
9. Replace—Update your irrigation with more efficient drip or rotating sprinkler nozzles and use only highly efficient irrigation when necessary.
10. Wait—Don't overwater plants that look fine in the morning, but wilted or stressed in the midday sun—this is a common occurrence known as physiological drought.

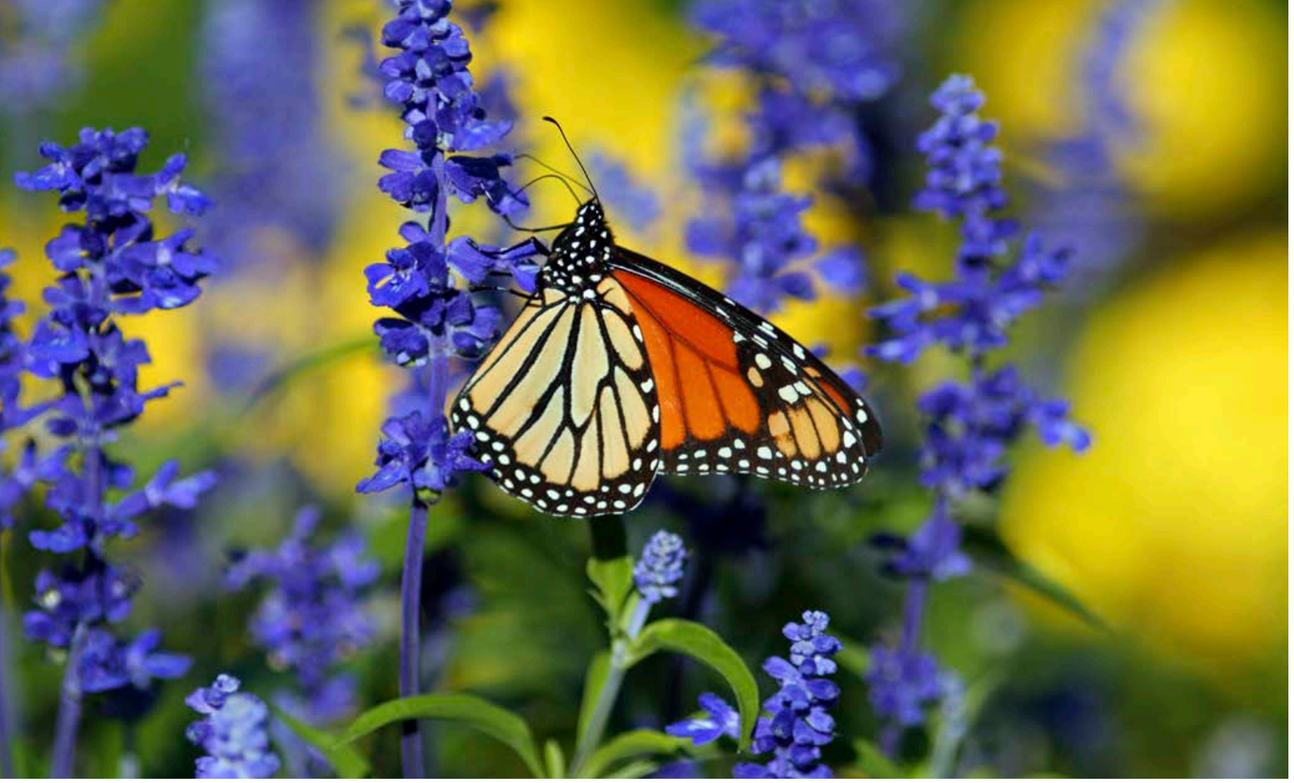
Sustainable gardening is an effective way to make an impact in protecting our precious resources via your own backyard.

WANT TO CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY TOWARD LOW-WATER GARDENING?

Below is a list of additional resources that will guide you on your path to learning why and how to create an environmentally friendly garden designed with your regional weather and rainfall patterns in mind.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

TIPS AND GUIDES TO BETTER UNDERSTAND LOW-WATER GARDENING		
Water-Smart Landscapes	The EPA's Guide to WaterSense Gardening	https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/docs/water-efficient_landscaping_508.pdf
Water Conservation in the Home Landscape	Water Conservation Tips from the UC Master Gardeners	http://sjmastergardeners.ucanr.edu/Water_Conservation_/
Low-Water Use Landscapes	Low-Water Resources from the UC Master Gardeners	http://sjmastergardeners.ucanr.edu/Water_Conservation_/Low_water_landscapes_/
Drought: Gardening Tips	Drought-Friendly Gardening Tips from the UC Master Gardeners	http://cagardenweb.ucanr.edu/Drought_/Drought_Gardening_Tips_/
Questions & Answers About Drought & Water Conservation	UC FAQ on Turfgrass and Drought	http://ucanr.edu/sites/UrbanHort/Water_Use_of_Turfgrass_and_Landscape_Plant_Materials/
Drought Resources	UC Davis Resources for Use During a Drought	http://publicgarden.ucdavis.edu/public-garden/drought-resources
Grouping Plants into Hydrozones	Hydrozoning Basics from the Cooperative Extension System	http://articles.extension.org/pages/61378/grouping-plants-into-hydrozones
Hydrozones	Sample Hydrozone Blueprint from Santa Clara County	https://www.sccgov.org/sites/dpd/DocsForms/Documents/Brochure_Landscape_Hydrozone.pdf
Urban Water Conservation and Efficiency Potential in California	Drought and Water Statistics from the Pacific Institute	http://pacinst.org/app/uploads/2014/06/ca-water-urban.pdf
The Watershed Approach to Landscaping	Understanding the Four Principles of the Watershed Approach to Landscaping	http://greengardensgroup.com/watershed-approach-to-landscaping/
ReScape California	Resources for the Community and Landscape Professionals	http://rescapeca.org/
Gardening Where You Are	A Story About Keeping and Removing Specific Plants	http://summer-dry.com/gardening-where-you-are-2/
Green Your Concrete Footprint	Steps to Shrink Your Carbon Footprint in Cities	http://greengardensgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Green-Your-Concrete-Footprint-Urban-Permeable-Brochure.pdf
The Drought-Tolerant Garden (Los Angeles County Handbook)	Watershed Approach to Landscaping in Los Angeles County	http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/green_drought-tolerant-garden.pdf



TIPS AND GUIDES TO BETTER UNDERSTAND LOW-WATER GARDENING

San Diego Sustainable Landscape Guidelines	Watershed Approach to Landscaping in San Diego County	http://greengardensgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/San-Diego-Sustainable-Landscape-Guidelines.pdf

CHOOSING AN IRRIGATION METHOD AND TOOLS

Watering Device Types	Stockton, CA Guide to Types of Irrigation	http://www.stockton.watersavingplants.com/Watering-Guide/DeviceTypes.php
Common Outdoor Water-Saving Tools	Guide to Common (and Uncommon) Water-Saving Tools	http://wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserve/landscape-care/water-saving-toolbox/common-outdoor-water-saving-tools/

FINDING THE PLANTS FOR YOU

Invasive Plants In Your Region	PlantRight List of Regional Invasive Plants and Replacement Options	http://www.plantright.org/
Arboretum All-Stars	Interactive UC Davis "All-Star" List of California-Friendly Plants	http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum_all_stars.aspx
Introducing Arboretum All-Stars	Printable Guide to UC Davis "All-Star" List of California-Friendly Plants	http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/documents/AllStarsBook_201415_final-reduced.pdf
Nifty 50 Plants for WaterSmart Landscapes	San Diego County List of "Nifty 50" WaterSmart Plants	https://www.watersmartsd.org/content/nifty-50-plants-watersmart-landscapes
35 Low-water Plants You've (Probably) Never Heard Of	UC Davis List of Specific Low-Water Plants for Your Garden	https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/blog/35-low-water-plants-youve-probably-never-heard
Life After Lawn	Planting in Place of a Lawn from UC Davis	https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/life-after-lawn
Drought-Tolerant Plant List	Drought-Tolerant Plant List from the Southern California Metro Water District	http://www.bewaterwise.com/Gardensoft/browser04.aspx?SearchType=Characteristic
The San Francisco Low-Water Use and Climate-Appropriate Plant List	Detailed Spreadsheet by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission	https://sfwater.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=8680
Native Plant Lists by Region	Interactive Native Plant Lists by Region	http://www.cnps.org/cnps/grownative/lists.php
The UC Guide to Healthy Lawns and Irrigation Schedules	UC Interactive Watering Guide For Healthy Lawns	http://ipm.ucanr.edu/TOOLS/TURF/MAINTAIN/irrsched.html
Landscape Water-Use Planning Tool	Interactive Guide to Choosing Plants for Your California City	http://www.waterwonk.us/

ABOUT SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION

Sustainable Conservation's mission is to help our Golden State thrive by uniting people to address the most pressing environmental challenges facing this beautiful state. For over 25 years we have worked successfully to conserve, protect, and restore California's natural resources.

We believe that incredible opportunities exist when you make a commitment to finding solutions that benefit the environment, citizens, and the economy all at once.

Sustainable Conservation's focus on water-efficient gardening is just one aspect of our wider focus on the four principles we mentioned earlier in this guide: groundwater conservation, preventing the spread of invasive plants, efficient irrigation for farming, and water quality protection.

EACH PRINCIPLE THAT GUIDES US CAN BE SEEN IN THE WORK WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, INCLUDING:

- Building subterranean savings accounts to help farmers weather future droughts.
- Stopping the spread and sale of invasive plants to safeguard our state's unique biodiversity.
- Offering new irrigation approaches to improve efficiency and protect the groundwater in our communities.
- Empowering farmers to demonstrate how improved water quality and thriving crops go hand in hand.

Our success in complex projects like these is driven by our powerful partnerships, innovative solutions, trusted leadership—

AND BY SUPPORTERS LIKE YOU.

Generosity from donors helps support Sustainable Conservation's important natural resource restoration and conservation projects, and helps us join hands with organizations as diverse as the Almond Board of California, UC Davis, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Coca-Cola North America, the California Coastal Commission, and Lowe's to turn big ideas for protecting our environment into a reality.

Finding creative, resourceful ways to conserve and reuse California's water will always—regardless of the weather—be essential to sustaining our communities, the environment, and our food sources. California's variable climate means that we need to be ready for droughts and floods, conserving during dry times and capturing plentiful rain in wet years in our groundwater aquifers. Your commitment to water-wise gardening contributes to California's resilience, and we thank you!

Please share this guide with your friends and family and encourage them to protect and conserve the valuable water that hydrates us and grows our crops.

And if possible, please stand with us in the fight to save our most precious resources. Your support is essential to helping Sustainable Conservation conserve water for the future. Thank you for your generosity.

DONATE

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www.suscon.org

Sustainable Conservation helps California thrive by uniting people to solve the toughest challenges facing our land, air, and water.

Every day, we bring together business, landowners, and government to steward the resources on which we all depend in ways that make economic sense. Because we know that common ground is California's most important resource.