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 now to save water, time, and money for years to come. It is not intended as your only resource, but it will help you become an at-home ecosystem manager with a beautiful, water-efficient, and fire-resilient landscape or garden.

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 and fire safety
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 sustainable gardening journey.

Photo credit: Saxon Holt

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Photo credit: FarOutFlora.com

INTRODUCTION

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

According to the California Water Efficiency Partnership, sustainable landscaping transcends water-use efficiency to reflect a site's climate, geography, and soils. These practices help reduce costs, runoff, green waste, pesticides, fertilizers, and greenhouse gas emissions. Strategic, sustainable landscaping choices can also help improve wildlife habitat.

Read on to learn sustainable landscaping practices for a garden with appropriate water use for any climate, especially in California!

CHAPTER 1

WHY MAKE YOUR GARDEN SUSTAINABLE?

California's water has been working overtime! Making our gardens sustainable and water-efficient is an easy way to have a big impact in the fight to save our water.

When and where we get our water is changing. More precipitation falls as rain and in flashier, bigger storms. California cannot depend on sustained snowmelt in hotter months, and our groundwater is used beyond what rainfall can replenish without our help. Multi-year droughts are our new normal.

Gardens can offer personal respite and help cool our cities, and a climate-adapted garden will do so with far less water.

It may surprise you to learn that about half of California's urban water use goes to residential and commercial landscaping, with about 70% of that used by residences. That means if you have a lawn or yard, you can make a difference today for our ecosystems, farms, and communities!

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

Sustainable gardening often requires less maintenance and cost, and can create spectacular, eye-catching displays of non-invasive plants to benefit local wildlife. If we monitor our personal outdoor water use, we can beautify our homes and communities while conserving our most precious resource now, and into the future.

SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION RECOMMENDS FOUR MAIN PRINCIPLES FOR GARDENING:

1. Garden where you are with the right plant for the right place.
2. Irrigate only when necessary using high-efficiency systems.
3. Build healthy living soil.
4. Capture rainwater as a resource.

This guide will focus on gardening where you are with the right plant choices for the right place and how to use efficient irrigation. We will also offer resources for overall soil health and capturing rainwater.

These principles are useful to maintain a sustainable, climate-friendly cargen, and they are central to our role as local natural resource stewards.

Sustainable Conservation's work to conserve groundwater, restore habitat, build healthy soils, and protect water quality is key to our mission: advancing the collaborative stewardship of California's land, air, and water for the benefit of nature and people.

Together, we can create a a healthy environment and habitat for all of California.

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 its own unique watershed: a kind of tiny habitat separated from other yards by how water flows across and drains through it.

Every yard has its own microclimates, slopes and hills, plant history, soil types, and requires different amounts of sun, shade, and water. When planting a low-water friendly garden, you can take advantage of these elements by creating hydrozones.

A **hydrozone** is a section of your yard or garden where plants with similar water needs are grouped. This way, you can tailor the amount and frequency of irrigation and avoid overwatering plants that need less.

Hydrozoning is especially useful in yards with different degrees of slope, soil type, drainage, and sun exposure. Grouping plants helps you avoid watering individual plants at different rates – likely overwatering others nearby!

To conserve water and promote plant health, place plants with lower water needs in areas with longer sun exposure and less, or no, supplemental irrigation. Plants that need more water can go in partial shade areas, where they will retain moisture longer.

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.

FOR MORE INFO

Grouping Plants into Hydrozones

Hydrozone Landscaping Brochure

Lower elevation areas, areas where water runoff collects, or swales you create are great for plants that need or can tolerate wet soil.

These plants may still have a useful role in your garden, and you can even plant them near streams and ponds.

If you are planting a new garden, choose plants that thrive with naturally occurring rain and very little supplemental watering to create a low-maintenance garden and save water.

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.

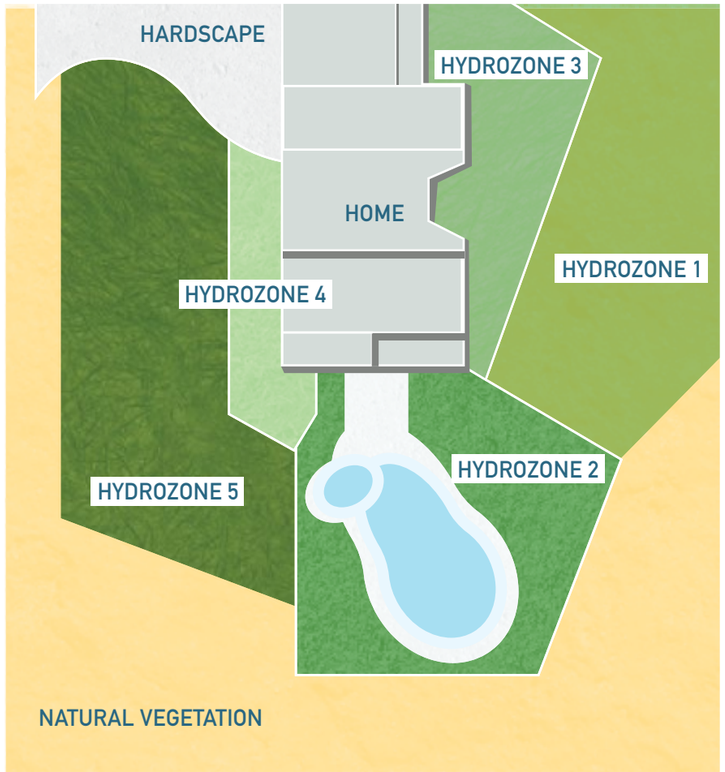
Trees and shrubs generally need deep watering less frequently and should be in their own zone.

If you plan on adding specific plants that require higher amounts of water (like roses) group these for easy and efficient irrigation.

If you plan to include a section of lawn, consider where you will most enjoy it and can meet its higher water requirements.

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

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.

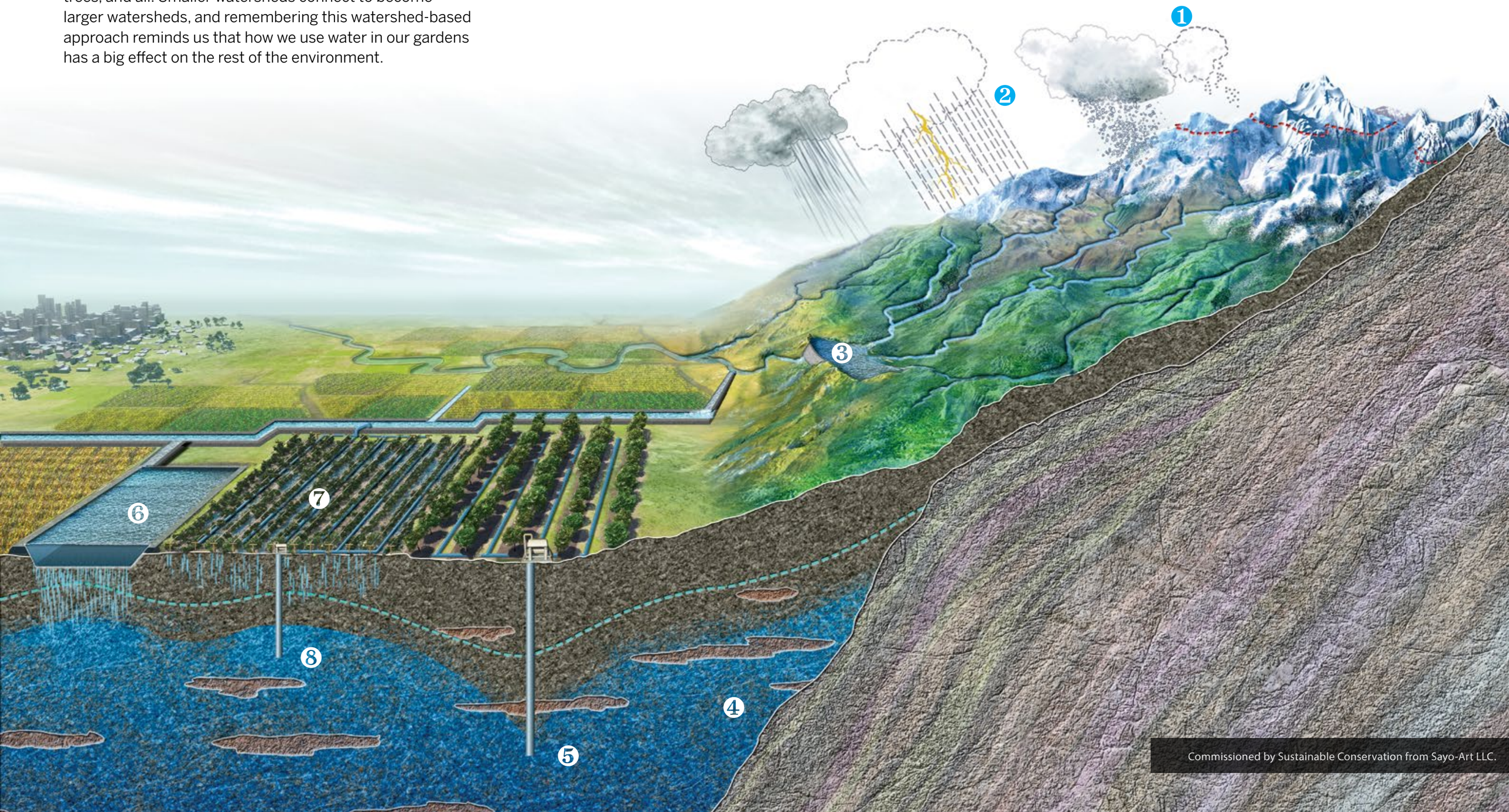
WHAT IS A HYDROZONE?

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

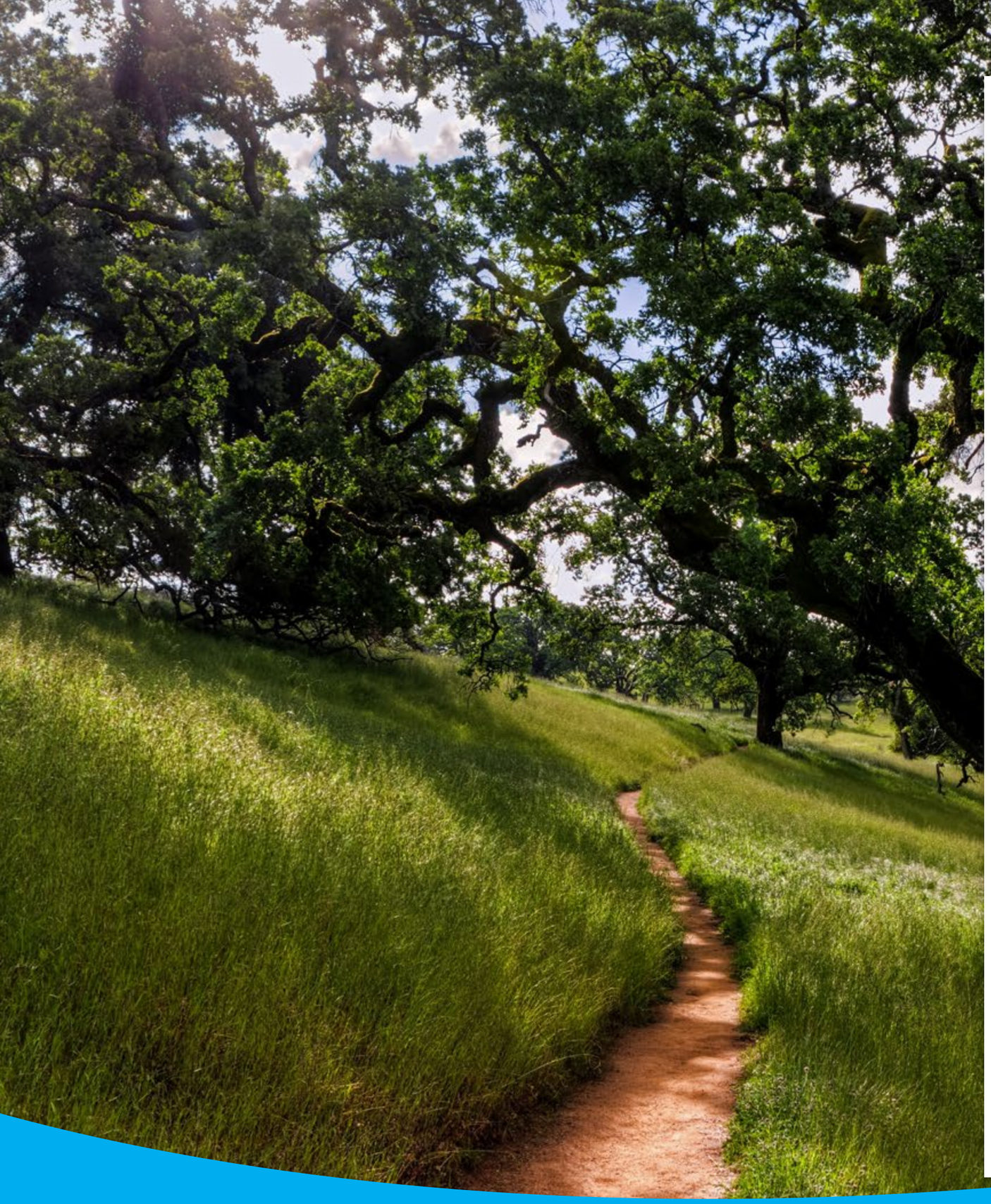
What Is a Watershed?

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.



CHAPTER 3

FIRE-SMART LANDSCAPING

Fire-smart landscaping is more than just tidy gardening. It's about choosing plants that help defend your home from wildfire. With proper care, you can reduce fire risk, conserve water, and boost property value.

Key Principles

Choose Wisely: Not all "fire-safe" plants are created equal. Resistance depends on moisture content, growth patterns, and regular maintenance - not just a "low maintenance" label.

Maintenance Matters: Healthy, well-watered plants are less flammable. Prune, water, and clean up regularly to reduce dry, dead material.

Smart Placement: Keep plants at least 5 feet from buildings. Avoid letting them touch siding, eaves, or decks, and remove overhanging branches.

Mulch Carefully: Skip flammable mulches like bark or wood chips near structures. Opt for non-combustible options like gravel or compost.

Tree Care: Shade trees provide cooling benefits but need regular assessment. Trim lower limbs and avoid branches that hang over roofs or gutters.

FOR MORE INFO

Wildfire Defensible Buffer Zones

Focus on plant traits like high moisture, low resin, and open growth habits. Use drip irrigation and avoid overwatering. Prune for open structure and manage shedding from aging plants Diversify your plants, but prioritize fire resilience.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE: YOUR HOME'S FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

Defensible space is a critical buffer between your home and flammable vegetation or materials. It slows the spread of wildfire, gives firefighters a safer space to work, and boosts your home's chance of survival.

Be sure to check with local fire departments or fire protection districts to see if your county has stricter standards than the State's minimum requirements. San Diego County, for example, requires 50 feet of clearance in Zone 1 (5 – 30 feet from the home for State requirements).

Zone-by-Zone Breakdown

ZONE 0: IMMEDIATE ZONE, 0 TO 5 FEET FROM YOUR HOME

This is the most important area to protect. Most homes are lost to embers that can travel far ahead of the fire.

1. Use hardscape like gravel or concrete; avoid bark mulch.
2. Remove all dead leaves, pine needles, and debris from roofs, gutters, decks, and stairways.
3. Relocate furniture, planters, and wood piles.
4. Replace wood fencing or structures connected to the house with noncombustible materials.
5. Relocate garbage bins, vehicles, boats, and RVs.

ZONE 1: 5 TO 30 FEET FROM YOUR HOME

Reduce vegetation and space out plants to prevent fire from moving toward the house.

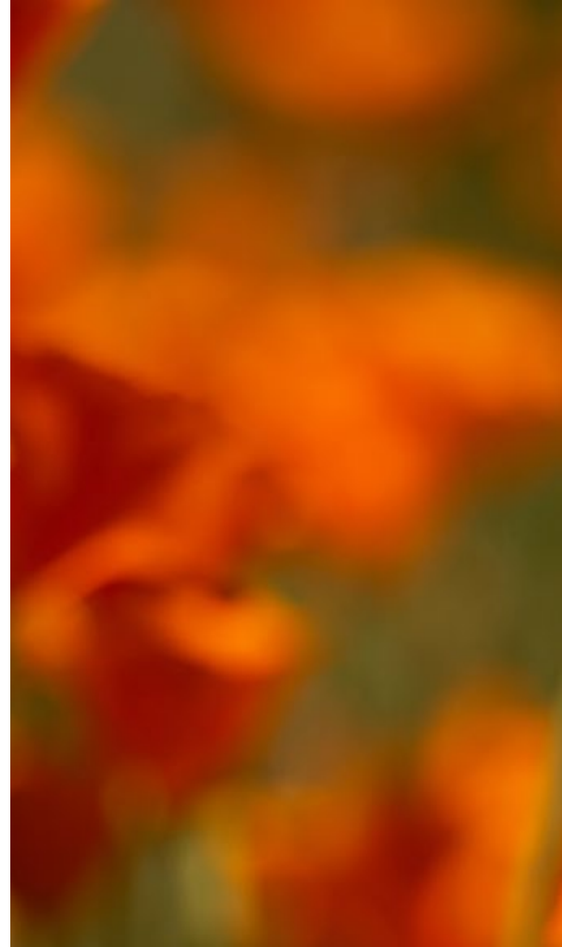
1. On a slope, increase the distance to 100 feet downhill of the structure.
2. Clear all dead or dry grass, plants, and leaves.
3. Trim trees to at least 10 feet from each other.
4. Remove pine needles and dry material.
5. Create space between trees, shrubs, and anything flammable (e.g., patio furniture, swing sets).

ZONE 2: 30 TO 100 FEET FROM YOUR HOME

The goal here is to limit fuel and reduce fire intensity as it moves closer.

1. Cut grasses to under four inches.
2. Create horizontal and vertical spacing between vegetation layers (e.g., grass, shrubs, trees).
3. Clear fallen twigs, bark, and other plant debris—but up to three inches of ground cover may be allowed.
4. Maintain 10 feet of bare soil around firewood piles, propane tanks, and outbuildings.

For personalized advice, consult local nurseries or your county's UC Cooperative Extension to tailor a fire-smart plan that suits your region and garden.



CHAPTER 4

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 a nearly year-round lack of water. We also assume plants that require watering cannot tolerate drought. There is a more practical way to select plants that can thrive with little to no supplemental watering.

Plants

The first step in creating a low-water garden is to garden with plants that are appropriate to your regional climate. Plants that can adapt to typical rainfall patterns in your area will flourish with much less water and work on your part.

Start by finding your climate zone, also known as the Sunset Climate Zones, and then create a list of plants you'd like based on what's appropriate to your region. Many beautiful low-water plants thrive in summer-dry climates and they can add color, interest, and variety to our gardens. Popular tropical plants and turfgrass often depend on more water and are not always suited to the dry, Mediterranean climate in much of California and the West.

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

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 that benefits local wildlife. All new plants generally require more water until they're established. Fall is the best time to plant in California due to the usually abundant rainfall.

Remember this with a 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 in your garden and in natural areas around you. Invasives can destroy wildlife habitat, clog streams, and create fire hazards. Regional research will help you identify invasive plants where you live. You can 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. Studies show that homes shaded by trees can demand up to 10% less energy than unshaded homes. 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 the right tree for your space based on its mature size.

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

A SELECTION OF WESTERN TREES WITH 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)
- 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 Green Gardens Group

Photo credit: UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden

CHAPTER 5

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, START WITH THIS APPROACH:

To test your soil's permeability, you don't need specialized 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 drainage takes longer, you may want to build your soil health 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.

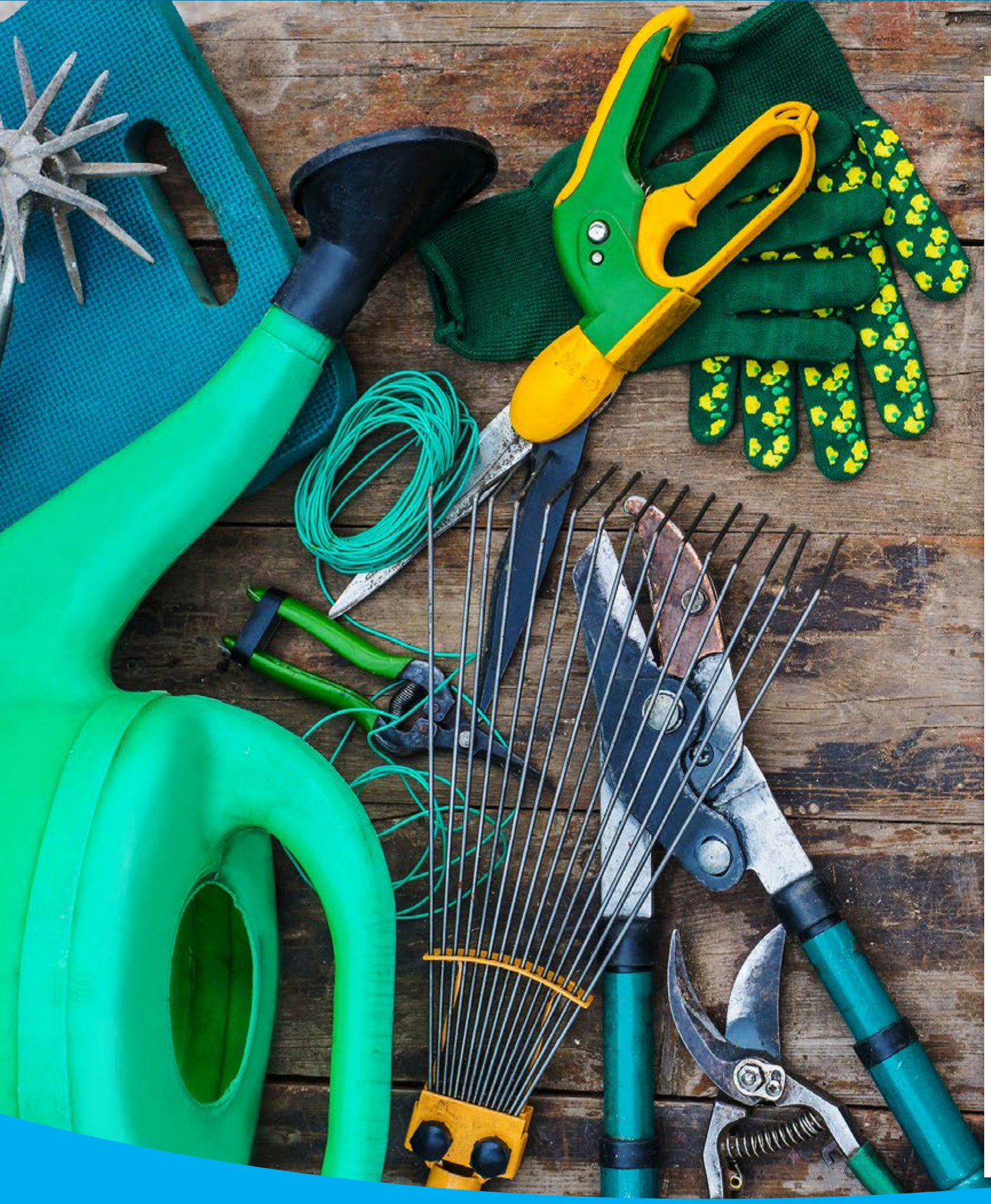
Schedule your irrigation at sunrise or sunset, because soil absorbs the most water when the temperature is lower. And remember: all irrigation methods are inefficient if used incorrectly!

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 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 6

TEN STEPS TO TAKE NEXT

(plus 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 help protect our precious natural resources via your own backyard.

WANT TO CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY TOWARD LOW-WATER GARDENING?

We've included 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		
Environmental Protection Agency's Watering Tips	The EPA's Watering Tips	https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watering-tips
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_/
Tips for A Drought-Friendly Garden	Drought-Friendly Gardening Tips from the UC Master Gardeners	https://ucanr.edu/blog/real-dirt/article/tips-drought-tolerant-garden
California Native Plant Society	Watershed Approach to Landscaping	https://www.cnps.org/gardening/the-watershed-approach-to-landscaping-7431
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	https://landscape-water-conservation.extension.org/grouping-plants-into-hydrozones/
Water Use in California's Communities	Drought and Water Statistics from the Public Policy Institute of California	https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/water-use-in-californias-communities.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
Ocean-Friendly Gardens	L.A. Surfrider Foundation's Guide to an Ocean-Friendly Garden	https://la.surfrider.org/hubfs/Ocean-Friendly-Gardens-2025-Guide/Surfrider-OFG-Garden-Guide.pdf?hsLang=en
Managing Tough Weather Conditions	UC Master Gardeners' Guide to Managing Various Weather Conditions	https://ucanr.edu/site/uc-marin-master-gardeners/extreme-conditions

CHOOSING AN IRRIGATION METHOD AND TOOLS

Saving Water Outdoors	All About Irrigation - Drip, Drip, Hooray	https://wateruseitwisely.com/saving-water-outdoors/efficient-irrigation/
EPA WaterSense Devices	The EPA's Watersense Indoor and Outdoor Products	https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-products
Be Water Wise	Resources for Saving Water, Replacing Turf, and Local Rebates in California	https://www.bewaterwise.com/
Irrigation: How To, How Much	UC Master Gardeners' Guide to Home Irrigation	https://ucanr.edu/site/uc-marin-master-gardeners/irrigation-how-how-much

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
UC Davis Plant Sales	Purchase the "All-Stars" through UC Davis	https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/plant-sales
Nifty 50 Plants for WaterSmart Landscapes	San Diego County List of "Nifty 50" WaterSmart Plants	https://www.sdcwa.org/sites/default/files/Nifty50.pdf
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 California Water Service	https://www.calwater.com/conservation/low-water-drought-resistant-plants/
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
Pollinator-Friendly Native Plant Lists by Region	The Xerces Society's Regional Pollinator-Friendly Plant Lists for California	https://xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/pollinator-friendly-plant-lists?field_state_target_id=83
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/
Find Native Plant Nurseries	California Native Plant Society's Nursery Finder Tool	https://calscape.org/california-nurseries

ABOUT SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION

Sustainable Conservation advances the collaborative stewardship of California's land, air, and water for the benefit of nature and people. For over 30 years, we have worked successfully to conserve, protect, and restore California's natural resources.

SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION'S VISION:

California successfully adapts to and mitigates climate change.

Our water ecosystems are healthy and support California's diversity of wildlife and people.

All Californians have access to clean, reliable, and affordable water, and reduced flood risk.

California agriculture thrives and stewards natural resources to feed the state and the nation.

THE WORK WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED OVER THE LAST THREE DECADES INCLUDES:

- Working with the people manage groundwater to implement on-farm recharge and build large-scale watershed modeling across the Central Valley.
- Working in the soil-water nexus to build a more sustainable water supply.
- Partnering with government and restorationists to increase the pace and scale of ecological restoration.
- Reimagining agicultural waste as a resource to improve our water quailty and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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

AND BY SUPPORTERS LIKE YOU.

Our donors' generosity supports Sustainable Conservation's important natural resource restoration and conservation projects. Their investments empower us to join hands with researchers, community leaders, industry associations, government agency staff, technical service providers, non-profits, and more to build a bridge to a sustainable future.

Finding creative, resourceful ways to conserve and reuse California's water will always be essential to sustaining our communities, the environment, and our food sources.

Together, we can conserve our water during dry times and co-create partnerships and practices for when water returns.

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

Sustainable Conservation

SAN FRANCISCO HEADQUARTERS
98 Battery Street, Suite 302
San Francisco, CA 94111
415-977-0380

MODESTO
201 Needham Street
Modesto, CA 95354
209-576-7729

suscon@suscon.org
www.suscon.org

Sustainable Conservation advances the collaborative stewardship of California's land, air, and water for the benefit of nature and people.