

A vibrant garden scene featuring a stone path, purple flowers, and yellow flowers. The path is made of large, flat, light-colored stones. To the right of the path, there are several rows of plants. In the foreground, there are bright yellow flowers. Behind them are purple flowers. Further back, there are green plants and some red flowers. The background is filled with more greenery and flowers, creating a lush and colorful garden.

SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

6 SIMPLE STEPS TO A WATER-WISE GARDEN

Special insert from
Save our Water



CREATE A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN— AND SAVE WATER TOO.

Most people don't realize that 50 percent or more of the water we use every day goes to our lawn or landscaping. This guide will give you easy ways to create an inviting garden, filled with beautiful plants and flowers, that helps conserve one of California's most precious resources: water.

Water-wise gardens can have almost any kind of look, depending on your needs, location, and style. Create an inviting and shady retreat using beautiful drought-tolerant plants. Or design a dramatic low-water garden using elegant cacti, yucca, and other desert plants. Specially designed landscaping, as well as patios and other hardscapes, can save even more water.

Start with one or two of these ideas, or take the plunge and do them all. Whatever you do, you'll be making the right choice for your home while saving California's water.

GO NATIVE

Switching to drought-tolerant plants is a great first step. Many nurseries offer a wide selection of native shrubs, trees, perennials, and grasses; talk to your nurseryman to find out what's best for your garden. Another water-savvy option: try beautiful plants from other dry regions, like Australia, the Mediterranean, and South Africa. For healthiest plants, aim to group them according to similar watering needs. This promotes healthy growth and root systems, and reduces the risk of over- or under-watering. To find out what works in your region, go to the Sunset Plant Finder (sunset.com/plantfinder) or saveourh2o.org.



"I'm awestruck at how lush our garden is without any additional water."

Anne Severs, Livermore

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Superstar natives



Baja Fairy Duster

Bearberry

(*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)

Hardy groundcover, with tiny pink flowers in spring, red to purple foliage in fall.

Baja Fairy Duster

(*Calliandra californica*)

Native shrub grows to 5 ft.; puffy blooms are irresistible to hummingbirds.

Firecracker

Penstemon

(*Penstemon eatonii*)

Perennial accent plant grows to 3 ft.; dazzling red flowers bloom spring to early summer.

Wild Lilac

(*Ceanothus*)

Wide range of sizes (groundcover to tall shrubs). Elegant flowers attract butterflies.



SHRINK YOUR LAWN

4 no turf options

Combine easy-care, water-wise plants for a beautiful lawn-free garden. Look for drought-tolerant options, including:

- Native grasses
- Flowering perennials
- Succulents
- Hardy shrubs



Take a look at your yard. Do you really need that plot of water-guzzling lawn? Across California, lawns are the number-one consumer of residential water outdoors. Instead, try limiting turf to places where you really need it (like kids' play areas). Or try eliminating it altogether—it's the most effective way to reduce your outdoor water use (plus it gets you out of the mowing grind).

So be honest—if you don't use it, why not ditch it? Beautiful landscapes that replace turf with easy-care, drought-tolerant plants (see list, at left) will make you wonder why it took you so long to make the switch.



"I got rid of the grass—my water-wise garden is easy, it's beautiful, and we're saving water."
Santosh Seeram-Santana, Sacramento



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4 EASY WAYS TO SAVE WATER

Water-saving devices can be surprisingly easy to get up and running, with almost immediate results.

1. Drip irrigation

Tiny emitters affixed to flexible tubing release water directly onto the soil, replacing water-wasting sprayers.

2. Smart controller

Monitors local weather conditions to adjust watering to match soil type and individual plant needs.

3. High-tech sprinklers

These devices reduce runoff and wind blow, making watering more efficient.

4. Rain shutoff

Simple device installs onto irrigation systems to automatically stop watering when it's raining.



"You don't need to hire a contractor to do this stuff—it is very easy."
John Sahagian, Chino



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TAP INTO NATURE

One of the easiest things you can do to reduce water use in your garden is to turn to nature for help.

COMPOST Adding a generous (2- to 3-in.) layer of organic mulch around the base of plants helps cool soil, reduce evaporation, and inhibit water-thirsty weeds. Use readymade organic compost, or make your own out of garden clippings and other green waste collected in composting bins.

HARVEST RAINWATER Take advantage of what naturally falls from the sky. Simple landscape features, like dry creek beds and earthen berms, can direct water to your plants—rather than down the driveway. Another fun idea: install pleasing rain chains in place of traditional downspouts to guide water into cisterns (look for covered cistern designs with hose-friendly spigots for easy watering). Check garden supply stores and online sources for ideas and options.

"I love the amount of birds, butterflies and beneficial insects that come to my garden. It is a delightful thing to see everyday."

Ruth Saludes, Fresno



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TRY A PERMEABLE PATIO

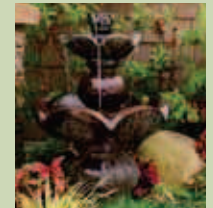
Concrete is one of the most common backyard hardscapes. Yet concrete is impermeable, meaning rainwater can't soak naturally into the soil. Replacing concrete with 100-percent permeable or semi-permeable materials allows water to percolate into the soil, and to your plants' roots. Plus, these hardscapes add unique beauty to your backyard living space.

▪ **STONE OR CONCRETE PAVERS** Leave generous gaps between pavers. Plant ultra-low groundcover, like hardy creeping thyme, in gaps.

▪ **STEPPINGSTONES OR PEA GRAVEL**

Use these in place of concrete or asphalt paths

▪ **DECOMPOSED GRANITE** This material, often called DG, gives a warm, Mediterranean feel to an outdoor living space



A hint of water

Try these tricks to give the illusion of water without increasing water use.

- Recirculating fountain
- Birdbath
- Dry creekbed
- Water jars and urns

"I made a change for myself, and if it inspires someone else then that's even better."

Yaz Manley, San Marcos



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MORE GREAT RESOURCES

YOUR LOCAL WATER AGENCY

Check websites for tips, news, and even grants for installing water-wise gardens.

NURSERIES & GARDEN-SUPPLY STORES

Knowledgeable staff can help you find plants and materials for your garden.

LOCAL COLLEGES

Many offer community classes in garden design, horticulture, and more.

SUNSET.COM/PLANTFINDER

Excellent resource for drought-tolerant varieties and native plants.

SAVEOURH2O.ORG

Downloadable guides, water-saving tips, water-conservation calculator, and other helpful tools from the California Department of Water Resources.

