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www.amwc.us

Atascadero Mutual Water Company

November 2010

# Water Watch

## 2011 WOODLANDS & WATERSHEDS COMMUNITY CALENDAR



The Woodlands and Watersheds Community Calendar is celebrating its thirteenth year. As in the past, the calendar's purpose is to celebrate the beautiful environment of North San Luis Obispo County and provide monthly information promoting stewardship in our own backyards.

This year's calendar features beautiful, full-color, local photography, images by Steve Udell, Karen Clanin, Jim Clanin, Mike Stephens, Roger Zachary, Rob DeGraff, Laurel Sherrie, David Westberg, and Jaime Hendrickson.

A new addition to this year's calendar is a Bird of the Month spotlight, showcasing a bird to be on the look out for when exploring the watershed. The bird photos and text were provided by Roger Zachary, "Bird Man of Atascadero," and Audubon trip leader.

A limited number of calendars will be available at the following locations after November 21:

Atascadero Mutual Water Company—5005 El Camino Real  
Atascadero Chamber of Commerce—6550 El Camino Real  
Bay Laurel Nursery—2500 El Camino Real

### Freezing Temperatures can Freeze your Pipes!

When the temperature is freezing outside, there is a chance your pipes could freeze. Following are some precautions you can take that could help prevent your pipes from freezing and possibly bursting:

- Wrap all exterior pipes with insulation
- Turn off any exterior water that you will not be using this winter
- Drain any exterior lines you will not need to use, such as irrigation lines

Never leave home if your pipes are frozen, as a leak could have developed in your pipes and may not be detectable until after the pipes thaw.

If you are planning to leave town when temperatures could dip into the freezing range, you may want to shut the water service off at your house. This could prevent flooding in your home (*not to mention a large water bill*) if a pipe freezes and breaks while you're away. **IF YOUR HOUSE IS EQUIPPED WITH FIRE SPRINKLERS, CONSULT WITH A FIRE PROTECTION CONSULTANT BEFORE TURNING THE WATER OFF!**

Feel free to call AMWC at 466-2428 if you have questions regarding freezing pipes.

# Highlights from the Autumn Garden Tour

## Seasonal Color

Fall leaves on a Redbud and Toyon berries starting to turn.



## Low-water Lawns

UC Verde Buffalo Grass and Dune Sedge lawns.



## Places to Relax

Intimate settings to enjoy a good book.



## Rain Chains

A unique alternative to traditional downspouts.



For more ideas from the 2010 Autumn Garden Tour visit Community Giving Backs website:

[www.communitygb.org](http://www.communitygb.org) Click on Photo Gallery, Atascadero, Community Events, 2010, Autumn Garden Tour



# Actions to a Healthier Landscape

**Mulch: It's the frosting on the cake and the sunscreen for your landscape.**

**No landscape is complete without mulch; it is the finishing touch to an aesthetically pleasing and healthy landscape. The many benefits of mulching include:** prevents weed growth, improves soil organic matter and nutrients, protects the soil from erosion, maintains a more even soil temperature, increases plant growth, conserves moisture, and reduces the use and cost of fertilizer.

Do take caution to select "sustainable" mulch; materials that are local and are byproducts of pruning and/or chipping trees branches are the best choice.

Visit [www.awmc.us](http://www.awmc.us) for a complete guide to The "Bear" Essentials of Mulching.

**Compost: The alchemy of turning green waste into gold for your garden.**

The first step to making your own compost is to rope off an area in the back or side yard that is out of the way, but easily accessible. The area should not have anything important growing on it, as the compost pile will quickly smother any grass or plants underneath.

Fall or early winter is the best time to get your compost pile started. Rake up your leaves and place them on the compost pile for a great start to some rich, dark compost. You can also add grass clippings, weeds, twigs, pine needles, fruit and vegetable peelings, newspapers, coffee grounds and any other organic material.

Occasionally, you will want to turn the pile over with a pitch fork to encourage even decomposition of the compost products.

Composting prevents unnecessary materials from being hauled to the landfill, reduces the need for manufactured fertilizers, and encourages the naturally occurring micro-organisms.

**Convert: Cut your grass back for good.**

Customers who participated in AMWC's Turf Conversion Rebate Program and removed 100% of their turf grass reduced their summer water use (June—Sept) an average of 31% the first year. Customers who removed part of their turf grass reduced their summer water use 27% the first year.

If lawns are desired, limit turf to no more than 25% of irrigated areas and select an area that can be used for play or relaxation.

For more information on the turf conversion rebate program, visit [www.amwc.us](http://www.amwc.us) or call 461-7217 x22.