

Water Watch

www.amwc.us

Atascadero Mutual Water Company May 2008

Sustainable Landscape Workshop Series

Once again, the Atascadero Mutual Water Company and the North County Partners in Water Conservation will offer a free summer workshop series designed to maximize outdoor water efficiency and prevent high summer water bills.

Seating is limited. Visit www.amwc.us for additional information and to register or call 461-7217 x17.

Drip Irrigation: A Hands-On Approach

Drip irrigation saves water, time and effort! Learn how to design, build and operate water-saving drip systems. This workshop will be both outdoors and indoors.

*June 28th, 9:30-11:30 am
Paso Robles Library, Paso Robles*

Home Sprinkler Systems & Landscape Irrigation

Over 50% of the water used in the North County is used for landscape irrigation, which places significant stress on our limited water resources. This workshop focuses on the design and maintenance principles of overhead sprinklers and irrigation controller programming, and provides you with the information you need to more efficiently operate your landscape irrigation system.

*June 5th, 6:00-8:00 pm
AMWC Office, 5005 El Camino Real*

*July 12th, 9:30-11:30 am
Paso Robles Library, Paso Robles*

Plant Selection for North County Landscapes

See and learn about 75 plants that once established will survive without water. Choosing the right plants will help reduce ongoing maintenance and the use of water, fertilizers, and pesticides and help make your landscape a place you can continually enjoy.

*August 12th, 6:00 – 8:00 pm
AMWC Office, 5005 El Camino Real*

*August 16th, 9:30 - 11:00 am
Paso Robles Library, Paso Robles*

Elements of a Green Landscape

The purpose of a “Green Landscape” is to minimize the energy and resources expended to create a beautiful landscape while at the same time reducing or eliminating some of the pollutants that create “urban run-off”. A traditional landscape requires the use of significant natural resources including the energy needed to pump water, fuels and oils for mowers and other power equipment, and the production and application of fertilizer and pesticides. By creating a green landscape, we reduce our use of fertilizers and pesticides, which ultimately end up in the Salinas River and our drinking water supply. A green landscape
(continued on back)

Free Home Water Survey

You are invited to participate in our highly successful **Home Water Survey Program**. The program is free and is designed to help our customers conserve water and manage their landscape irrigation more efficiently.

During your **Home Water Survey**, AMWC’s water conservation staff will:

- ◆ Inspect each irrigation station
- ◆ Create a site-specific irrigation schedule
- ◆ Provide you with a checklist of improvements for your irrigation system
- ◆ Check toilets for leaks
- ◆ Show you how to read your water meter
- ◆ Provide other water conservation tips

Each appointment is tailored to meet your needs; a typical appointment takes between 60 and 90 minutes. We encourage you to take advantage of this free program by calling 461-7217, ext.17, and we look forward to hearing from you.



Deer grass at the Atascadero Lake Park.



Strawberry madrone's attractive bark and manzanita-like flowers.



Jerusalem sage

Five Great Plants for Your Garden

Proper plant selection is essential in creating delightful Atascadero- friendly landscapes. The following plants will reduce maintenance and the use of water and chemicals in your garden.

Strawberry madrone – *Arbutus unedo*

Smaller and easier to grow than our native Madrone, Strawberry madrone is a large shrub or small tree growing 8'-12' with small clusters of white or pink flowers. The smooth, red bark is accented by red strawberry-like fruit in winter.

Canberra gem – *Grevillea 'Canberra'*

Canberra gem is a deer-resistant, mounding shrub 5'-10' high and 6'-12' wide. It produces interesting bright red flowers in early spring.

Jerusalem sage – *Phlomis fruticosa*

Native to the Mediterranean, Jerusalem sage is a perennial-like, small shrub with bright yellow flowers and fuzzy, silver-gray foliage. This is a great natural looking plant. It attracts butterflies, birds, and bees.

Mexican sage – *Salvia leucantha*

Flowering in late summer, Mexican sage is a perennial, with gray-green leaves and fuzzy, purple flowers. It attracts butterflies and hummingbirds.

Deer Grass – *Muhlenbergia rigens*

This deer-resistant Atascadero native grass adds texture in the garden. It can be used for mass plantings or as a specimen. It has green, wispy blades in spring that fade to gold in summer.

Elements of a Green Landscape (*continued from front*)

will also reduce the amount of exhaust emissions entering the air we breathe and the solid waste entering our landfills from grass clipping and leaves. Following these simple guidelines will help create a beautiful and sustainable landscape.

Planning & Design: Analyze your site and become familiar with the environmental factors in your landscape such as sun, shade, moisture, soil type, and air movement (wind).

Plant Selection: Selecting the right plants for your landscape reduces maintenance and can provide year-round interest.

Limit Turf Area: Turf requires constant water, fertilizer, and labor. Limit turf to small, functional areas less than 25% of your landscaped area.

Soil: Select plants that are adapted to your soil type. When necessary, add soil amendments to improve drainage, retain moisture and nutrients, and enhance root development.

Mulching: Mulch is a beneficial element in the landscape. It reduces weeds, conserves soil moisture, recycles nutrients, and moderates soil temperature. Lawn clippings and natural leaf build-up are great sources of mulch.

Irrigate Efficiently: Designing and installing an appropriate irrigation system is essential. For more information on irrigation, attend one of the Sustainable Landscaping Workshops or participate in the AMWC's Home Water Survey.

