the dirt

Irvine Ranch Water District

SPRING 2020 GARDENING NEWSLETTER

Garden inspiration.

Welcome to the first issue of The Dirt, Irvine Ranch Water District's new quarterly gardening newsletter.

We'll help you with water-friendly advice for every season in your garden. Need inspiration? IRWD has everything you need to plan your water-efficient landscape.

Demonstration Garden at IRWD's Sand Canyon Avenue office

Discover design

Visit *RightScapeResources.com* to browse interactive garden tours and photo galleries, gather tips about landscape design, and learn to set up a water-efficient irrigation system. Strive for simplicity, with colors and textures in mind. Plan your garden palette, with examples of how plants and hardscape blend to create attractive focal points in your yard. A questionnaire will help you identify your garden goals.

Learn how to hydrozone

Different plants require different amounts of sunlight and water. Hydrozoning groups of plants with similar requirements save water and promote a healthy and sustainable landscape. For more information visit *bit.ly/hydrozoning*.

Browse our plant lists

Another key feature to *RightScapeResources.com* is our searchable online plant list, featuring everything from groundcover and grasses to trees, flowers and native plants.

Other helpful resources include:

- **OC Master Gardeners:** *mgorange.ucanr.edu*
- **California Native Plant Society:** *cnps.org*

Happy gardening!

EXPERT INTERVIEW

Start by watering deep, but don't overwater.

Jodie Cook

Native garden

Jodie Cook | Owner of Jodie Cook Landscape Design
A sustainable-landscape designer, instructor, speaker and program manager. She has been designing climate-friendly gardens for over 20 years and teaches sustainable landscape and native garden design at Saddleback College.

IRWD: Many of our customers are interested in transforming part of their landscape using water-thrifty California native plants. How should they start a project like this?

Cook: This is the perfect time of year to reap all the rewards a California native garden will bring. In the early establishment period (as roots move from the nursery container into garden soil), deeply water every 10 days or so if there is no significant rainfall and avoid overwatering. Rainfall counts, so reset the clock if there is a significant natural shower. You will find watering may be quite infrequent, if at all, during the rainy season.

IRWD: Can natives and non-natives grow in the same yard?

Cook: Yes. But make sure higher-water plants such as roses and hydrangeas are not watered on the same schedule as your climate-adapted native plants.

IRWD: Any tips on selecting plants?

Cook: Add a few new plants to your garden each month in spring as new native species arrive at the nursery so that you ensure a varied and interesting garden all year round.

Time to plant.

Chaparral mallow

And that means it's time to go native.

California native plants make for a beautiful garden that is not only water-efficient but supports pollinators, birds and butterflies. If you plan to go waterwise, spring is a good time to plan and plant before the hot days of summer. But how to begin? Start by browsing *calscape.org*, and create a list of the plants you like. Think in groups of three: Select plants with a variety of dimensions (different heights, colors, textures), but with compatible growing needs (sun, water, soil).

Yarrow

Yellow bush penstemon

Here's a trio we're really digging.

Chaparral mallow
malacothamnus fasciculatus

Type: Shrub **Size:** 3.3-16 feet tall, 10 feet wide **Growth rate:** Fast **Flowering season:** Spring, summer **Sun:** Full sun **Summer irrigation:** 1 time max per month **Wildlife supported:** Butterflies, small birds

Yarrow
achillea millefolium

Type: Perennial herb **Size:** 1-3 feet tall, .5-1.5 feet wide **Growth rate:** Fast, moderate **Flowering season:** Spring, summer **Sun:** Full sun, part shade, full shade **Summer irrigation:** 1 time max per week **Wildlife supported:** Carnivorous insects, butterflies, bees

Yellow bush penstemon
keckiella antirrhinoides

Type: Shrub **Size:** 1.6-6.6 feet tall, 2-4 feet wide **Growth rate:** Moderate **Flowering season:** Spring **Sun:** Full sun, part shade **Summer irrigation:** 2 times max per month **Wildlife supported:** Hummingbirds, butterflies, bees

For more information on these and other California native plants, visit *calscape.org*.

Juan's tip of the season.

Pruning your landscape

Pruning is both a science and an art. The science is knowing the best time to prune and the best method to use. The ideal time to prune is winter, right before the onset of new growth. Remove damaged or diseased wood and foliage. The art of pruning is evaluating a plant and shaping its structure to achieve a specific appearance. Taking the time to learn more about your plants will result in a beautiful garden. Learn more about pruning by visiting *ceventura.ucanr.edu*. Click on the Landscape & Plant Pathology Program and then Pruning Small Trees and Shrubs.

Looking ahead.

Spring garden to-do list

- **Watch your watering:** Plants are starting to grow but water needs are still low. Be careful not to overwater. Check out *WateringGuide.com* for more tips.
- **Manage pests:** Spring is the best time to solve pest problems. Otherwise they'll be more of an issue come summer. For environmentally friendly solutions, visit the University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management System's website at *ipm.ucanr.edu*.
- **Mulch your planter beds:** Maintain a two- to four-inch layer of mulch around your plants. It supplies organic matter, helps infiltrate and retain water, and prevents compaction. Browse *RightScapeResources.com* for tips and tricks.

RightScape resources

All the resources you need to get started building your water-efficient landscape are available at *RightScapeNow.com*, including information on events and classes (currently held online). Our experts will share detailed information on how to plant a water-efficient landscape. Plus, check out our plant database at *RightScapeResources.com*.

Outdoor rebates

IRWD will help offset costs as you move to a water-efficient yard. We'll help you with turf removal, weather-based irrigation controllers, efficient sprinkler heads, drip kits and more. Details at *RightScapeNow.com*.

About The Dirt

The Dirt is a brand-new, quarterly gardening resource from Irvine Ranch Water District, created to help you grow a more beautiful, water-efficient garden. Each newsletter will bring you seasonal tips to keep plants thriving all year long.

Need to contact IRWD?

Customer Service: 949-453-5300
Email: CustomerService@IRWD.com
Website: *IRWD.com*

Join the conversation on social media

@IrvineRanchWaterDistrict
@IRWDNews
@IRWDNews
IrvineRanchWD