

*The Master Gardeners of San Mateo and San Francisco counties are
pleased to welcome you to our*

2012 Educational Garden Tour

We hope you have a wonderful day touring these beautiful gardens. All the gardens will be open from 10am to 4pm today. You are welcome to view them in any order.

We chose these gardens carefully. They are very different from one another. They range from small front yards to large properties. Some are manicured while some are natural. Some have large edible gardens, some are full of succulents, some focus on California native plants. What they have in common is that they are stunning examples of water-wise design.

These gardens are full of interesting water-wise plant choices. You won't see many thirsty Japanese maples, hydrangeas and rhododendrons in these gardens. You'll only see one lawn—and it's bermuda grass! Each garden designer has chosen a group of interesting plants that provide color and interest year-round, yet demand a fraction of the water used by conventional thirsty gardens. We'll have plant lists for you in each garden to help you learn about these great plant choices.

Over 50 Master Gardener volunteers will be available throughout the gardens. We are here to answer your questions and to talk about the plant choices and gardening practices that make each of these gardens such a beautiful and healthy place. Master Gardeners are teachers—we are UC trained volunteers that provide home gardeners with research-based information to promote healthy, sustainable gardening. Please ask us questions and learn how you can take these gardening practices home to your garden. Designers will also be present in the gardens.

Check out the Plant Sale at Redwood High School! This sale will feature hundreds of vegetable, herb and flower seedlings for your late summer garden. Succulent gardens will be available, as will a variety of Master Gardener publications—including the invaluable Master Gardener Handbook.

**For more information about the things you see and learn today, visit us at
SMSF-MasterGardeners.ucanr.org.**

The Gardens

(A) Redwood High School

**1968 Old County Road, Redwood City
The Master Gardener Demonstration Garden**

Master Gardeners do extensive work to promote gardens in our local schools and have developed a demonstration garden to aid in that effort. Redwood High School students and community volunteers have helped to create and maintain the REAL (Redwood Academy of Environmental Leadership) garden at the school. There is a lot going on in this garden, and Master Gardeners will be on hand to talk about

- ❖ Growing vegetables galore!
- ❖ Growing and using herbs
- ❖ Raising chickens
- ❖ Growing corn
- ❖ Composting and vermiculture (worm-composting)
- ❖ Using California native plants in natural areas
- ❖ Installing drip irrigation—a hands-on demonstration

(B) Cactus Garden

**San Carlos
Homeowners: Anne & Steve
Designed by Ron Marsh of Craftsman Landscapes.**

This front yard is a jewel of drought-tolerant design using exclusively cactus and succulent plants . A unique water feature and southwestern-style art complement the design. Come see what you can do with NO irrigation! Master Gardeners and the designer will be on hand to discuss:

- ❖ Cactus gardening
- ❖ Working with the micro-climates in your garden

(C) All-Edible Garden,

San Carlos

Homeowners: Shilpa & Bud

Designed by the homeowners

Why have a lawn when you can grow food? Homeowners Shilpa and Bud replaced their thirsty lawn with vegetables, berries, herbs and California native plants. Come see how an awkwardly shaped lot was turned into an attractive and productive space. Master Gardeners and the homeowners will be on hand to discuss:

- ❖ Sheet mulching to remove existing lawns
- ❖ Growing and using herbs
- ❖ Growing vegetables year-round
- ❖ Growing grapes and berries
- ❖ Using companion plants to attract beneficial insects

(D) A Garden of Rooms

Atherton

Homeowners: Chris & Marty

Designed by Kathleen Craig of Craig Design Associates

This large garden in Atherton is comprised of several garden rooms including the Meadow, the Farm, the Playground, the Container Garden and the Meditation Garden. It displays a number of beautiful design features, including a faux water feature, a poolside container garden, an enclosed “farm” and an outdoor kitchen. The design includes a number of water-wise alternatives to thirsty turf, including bunch grasses, an artificial turf putting green, and an extensive Bermuda grass lawn for use by the family and their dog. Master Gardeners and the designer will be on hand to discuss:

- ❖ Water-wise turf alternatives
- ❖ Elegant bunch grasses and meadow grasses
- ❖ Sheet mulching to remove lawns
- ❖ Growing fruit and vegetables
- ❖ Composting and vermiculture (worm-composting)
- ❖ Gardening in containers
- ❖ Healthy turf care

Also at this garden, our guests from Delta Blue Grass of Stockton will be on hand with a display of several water-wise alternative turf products, including no-mow blends and native grass blends.

(E) Natural Oak Garden

Homeowners: Catherine & Allan

Menlo Park

Designed by Jolee Horne

Our native oak trees create a very special environment in our gardens and can be harmed by summer irrigation. Jolee has used California natives and other plants from Mediterranean climates to create a relaxed, informal garden that can thrive in summer-dry conditions. Master Gardeners and the designer will be on hand to discuss:

- ❖ Plant choices that are appropriate under native California oaks
- ❖ Attracting wildlife into your garden
- ❖ Maintaining the health of our native oaks

(F) The Rockin' M Rancho

Homeowners: Carol and Bill

Menlo Park

Designed by Stephanie Morris of HLD Group Landscape Architecture and Sherry Hall of Terra Sole Nurseries.

From the street, it is easy to admire the beautiful patios, native plants and succulents featured in this southwestern style garden. Pass into the backyard, and the party begins! Homeowner and Interior Designer Carol Jorgenson has created an environment fit for entertaining a crowd. See the fun and fanciful southwestern art, creative garden structures, interesting use of containers and more. Master Gardeners and the designers will be on hand in this garden to discuss:

- ❖ Using succulent plants in the garden
- ❖ Hands-on demonstration of propagating succulents
- ❖ Attracting beneficial insects to your garden
- ❖ Hands-on display on building insect habitat
- ❖ Incorporating California native plants
- ❖ Gardening in containers

We thank all of the homeowners that graciously opened their gardens today.

How Much Water?

How much water does a plant need? It depends. It depends on your soil, the sun exposure, the wind, the competition from other plants and a variety of other factors. We suggest that you start with the following assumptions and adjust your water levels up or down as you see how your plants perform.

We can categorize plants according to how much water they typically require. Various sources use slightly different words, but these are the categories that are commonly used to describe water use. We've used these symbols on the handouts you'll receive today.

- ❖ **High/Regular Water Use (☀):** Require about 1" of water every 3-5 days during the hottest part of summer. This includes lawns, European white birches, most annuals & edibles.
- ❖ **Moderate/Medium Water Use (☂):** Require about 1" of water every 10-14 days in summer. Includes many common shrubs such as roses, boxwood, camellia, etc.
- ❖ **Low Water Use (☁):** Require about 1" of water every 3-4 weeks in summer. Includes many popular Mediterranean and Australian plants such as lavender, rosemary, and phormium.
- ❖ **Occasional/Very Low Water Use (☪):** Require about 1" of water every 6 weeks in summer (about 3 times total during the year). Many plants native to our area thrive on virtually no summer water, including California lilac (Ceanothus), manzanita and chaparral current (Ribes).
- ❖ **Drought tolerant (☪):** Can survive without irrigation in a typical year. Some plants in this category, including Coast Live Oaks and Fremontodendron, can be harmed by summer irrigation. Others look better when they receive occasional water. Know your plants!
- ❖ **Remember, all new plantings require ample water as their root systems develop.** Provide regular irrigation for the first 2 summers, even for water-wise plants.

Some other irrigation guidelines:

- ❖ **How do I know how much water I've put down?**
 - **If you are using spray irrigation,** you can use small cans (like tuna fish cans) to measure how much irrigation your plants are getting.

- **If you are using drip irrigation**, then consider how many gallons of water are being applied to the root zone of your plants. 1" of water is about ½ gallon of water over a 1' diameter, 4 gallons over a 3' diameter and 12 gallons over a 5' diameter.
- ❖ **Signs of over-watering look very much like signs of under-watering!** Use an inexpensive soil moisture meter to check the soil moisture several inches below the surface. The lower the water use of the plant, the more you can let the soil dry out before you irrigate.
- ❖ **Adjust your irrigation seasonally.** In a typical year, plants need only about half the irrigation in spring and fall that they do in mid-summer. They should require no supplemental irrigation during an average winter.
- ❖ **Heavy clay soils absorb water slowly and retain water for a long period of time.** Use the "cycle and soak" feature on your irrigation controller or use drip irrigation to apply water slowly and prevent runoff. Sandy soils need more frequent irrigation. Again—use that soil moisture meter to check before you water.
- ❖ **The more mature the plant, the further from the crown/stem of the plant you should be applying water.** New plants need water directly on the root ball. Avoid letting spray irrigation hit woody trunks.
- ❖ **Large plants, especially trees, should be watered less frequently but very deeply.**
- ❖ **Never use leaf-blowers on soil!**

Invest in efficient irrigation

- ❖ **Drip irrigation is extremely efficient** as it applies water directly to the root zone. Sprays can be converted to drip with a simple inexpensive conversion kit.
- ❖ **Spray irrigation is prone to misting, evaporation and wind-drift.** To minimize this, run sprays during the calmest, cool part of the day—typically early morning. Consider converting your spray heads to MP rotators which are much less prone to misting.

Compost and Mulch conserve water while they improve the health of your soil.

- ❖ **Compost may be the only soil amendment your plants need.** Compost feeds the life in your soil and that soil life feeds your plants. Soils rich in organic matter hold water better.
- ❖ **Mulch significantly reduces evaporation** and it also reduces runoff and reduces weeds. Organic mulches, such as fallen leaves, pine needles, and bark chips all break down slowly to feed the life in the soil. Some plants like gravel mulches. Cover the root zone with a generous application of mulch, but don't cover the crown/trunk of your plants.

Master Gardeners Advice to Grow By!

The Master Gardeners of San Mateo and San Francisco counties are a part of University of California Cooperative Extension. We are UC-trained volunteers who provide home gardeners with research-based information that promotes sustainable gardening practices and a healthy environment.

Our many activities in the community include...

- ❖ Providing Research-Based Advice and Information
 - Gardening Helpline
 - Plant Clinics
- ❖ Teaching Sustainable Gardening Methods
 - Classes on Edibles, Soil and More
 - Demonstration Gardens
 - Educational Garden Tours
 - Plant Sales
- ❖ Advising School Garden Leaders
 - Workshops
 - Curriculum
- ❖ Conducting Independent Research

Please visit our website at SMSF-MasterGardeners.ucanr.org to

- ❖ Learn more about our program
- ❖ Learn how to become a Master Gardener
- ❖ See our calendar of upcoming events
- ❖ Catch up on our latest research studies

Thank You!

We would like to thank ...

The homeowners who have so generously shared their gardens today.

The garden designers who have been so generous with their time and their expertise.

Our guests from Delta Blue Grass

The sponsors whose generosity helps support our activities:

Ah Sam Florist

Lyngso Garden Materials

Montanari Designs

Piazza Foods

Sequoia Health Care

*And all of the guests that have
shared this day with us!*