

Drought and Your Garden – Sustainability

What is “sustainable gardening” and why is it important?

There are 7 key principles to sustainable gardening.

Right plant, right place – Chose plants appropriate to our Mediterranean climate. Use information from the Master Gardener website or the Sunset Western Garden book. Check that both the size and the climate needs are appropriate to the location. Remember to read the plant label, many plants come in 1-gallon containers but can grow to 10 feet. Consider Arboretum All-Stars, they even have a few landscape plans. www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu

Slow, spread and sink the water into the soil – Avoid runoff by using drip irrigation where you can and by using sprinklers more often but for shorter run times. Allow rainwater to runoff your roof and into the garden rather than into the gutter.

Make every drop count – Eliminate decorative lawn and plant drought-tolerant plants instead. Adjust your irrigation system at least monthly to avoid over or under watering. Don’t let water run into the gutter. Group plants with similar water and sun needs. Mulch your flower and shrub beds. This reduces evaporation and weeds in your garden.

Feed the soil – Keep yard waste on your property by composting it. Use compost to feed the soil rather than synthetic fertilizers. Leaf litter will naturally compost and can be left on your flower beds during the fall and winter.

Remember the good bugs – Good bugs, if left to do their job, will take care of most insect problems. Use pesticides and herbicides as a last resort. Go to ipm.ucanr.edu for insect information.

Conserve energy – When you plant trees wisely they will shade your home and reduce your energy bill. Trees are most beneficial when planted on the south and west sides.

Support beneficial wildlife – Mass plantings, especially native plants, will support beneficial insects and birds. Be sure to provide a source of water and nesting sites for beneficial insects such as native bees, lady bugs and lacewings.

For more information go to cecolusa.ucanr.edu