



Chandler • Arizona



WaterSaver Newsletter

December 2011



Holiday Lights

No, we're not thinking electricity or wiring. We're talking about lighting up drab winter landscapes with some splashes of color using desert-adapted winter flowering perennials. Creating seasonal interest in your landscape is simply a matter thinking 'outside the box'. A few adjustments to your plant choices will soon have your yard beaming.

- Include drought-tolerant evergreen trees such as [fruitless Olive](#) or [Mastic](#) and shrubs like [Rosemary](#) or [Purple Hop Bush](#). Use them throughout your landscape to provide green foliage.
- Winter blooming shrubs include [Chuparosa](#), [Baja Fairy Duster](#), [Feathery Senna](#) or [Mexican Honeysuckle](#). Even succulents like [Blue Euphorbia](#) and [aloes](#) will liven up your landscape. Be sure to include winter blooming trees such as [Cascalote](#).
- Don't forget plant textures and foliage! The sculpture-like qualities of [agaves](#) or [Desert Milkweed](#) contrast nicely with soft, wispy bunches of [Muhlenbergia](#) grass or [Trailing Lantana](#). A vine like [Roger's Red grape](#) will provide stunning red leaf color (*shown in header above*).

With careful planning, colors and textures can improve the look of your winter landscape - and help satisfy your color cravings until spring.



Monthly Watering Advice

December

December and January are our coldest months, and plant water usage is at its lowest point. Keep in mind that too much water on plants encourages lush, active growth that is more prone to frost damage. Plants that are dehydrated or water stressed also incur more damage. Recommendations below are for plants that are established in the landscape (in the ground about 3-5 years).

Lawn watering

- Summer grass (Bermuda) - once every 30 days
- Overseded cool season grass (rye) - once every 14 days

If trees and shrubs are on the same valve:

- Desert Adapted - once every 35 days
- High Water Use - once every 18 days

Tree watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 45 days
- High Water Use - once every 21 days

In This Issue

[Holiday Lights](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Monthly Watering](#)

[Advice](#)

[Ask a Garden](#)

[Goddess](#)

[Plant of the Month](#)

[Water Wise Tips](#)

Upcoming Events

December 1 - 30

[Noche de las Luminarias at the Desert Botanical Garden](#)

January 21 -
[East Valley Citrus Clinic](#)

January 23 -
February 15
[Smartscape](#)

See complete schedule at
www.chandleraz.gov/water

Ask A Garden Goddess



I've been told fallen leaves are good for our soil. Is that true?

Some folks consider leaves on the ground 'litter' while savvy landscape owners know that they are really nature's 'mulch'. Fallen leaves provide

Shrub watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 30 days
- High Water Use - once every 14 days

Groundcover and vine watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 28 days
- High Water Use - once every 14 days

- Cacti and succulent watering - if needed
- Annuals watering - once every 10 days
- Wildflower watering - once every 15 days

Reduce your landscape watering 30 to 50 percent by adjusting your irrigation each season. ["Landscape Watering by the Numbers: A Guide for the Arizona Desert"](#) will help you determine how much water to apply and how long to run your system. Visit the interactive Web site at <http://www.wateruseitwisely.com> or request a free copy at www.chandleraz.gov/water

Bonus tip: To get up-to-date local weather and frost warning info, visit the National Weather Service Phoenix area web site at <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/psr/>.

a bountiful supply of nutrients like nitrogen, potassium, magnesium, manganese and carbon when broken down by micro and macro organisms. Plus they slow evaporation and help insulate the soil.

If your trees are in a lawn just mow over leaves with your lawnmower. In gravel areas the leaves can be left on site or added to a compost pile. If you need a little exercise, rake the leaves and dispose in your solid waste container.

Email your question to GardenGoddess@chandleraz.gov



Water Wise Tips



Grandpa always said "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." (Shhhh.....he actually borrowed that quote from Winston Churchill but don't tell.) The message is timely now when our thoughts turn to sharing the holidays with family and friends. This month we'd like to share information on maintaining landscapes during the winter season. A few simple tasks done now will ensure your yard will look its best when it 'wakes up' this spring.

Adjust Your Watering Schedules - Deep, infrequent irrigations are always recommended when applying water to your landscape, but during this cool season the interval in-between applications will need to be increased. Change your irrigation controller frequency.

Check Your Irrigation System - Emitters may become clogged and irrigation lines can develop leaks.

Apply Mulches - Organic mulches will improve your soil by adding nutrients and slowing moisture loss over your plants' root zone. Use compost or composted mulch.

Weed Control - Weeds can compete with other landscape plants for water and nutrients. Remove them when small before they produce seeds.

Don't Fertilize Plants - No fertilizing is necessary during the winter when plants are not actively growing.

Pruning - Wait until new growth has emerged before you prune away frost-damaged stems, usually late February.

Plant of the Month

Coral Aloe (*Aloe striata*)

Aloes are striking succulents from southern and eastern Africa that offer some of the best color for our landscapes with their impressive and long-lasting show of flowers during the winter and early spring.



Aloes have numerous forms ranging from low groundcovers to tree-like species. They look best with partial or filtered shade and occasional watering and are easily grown in containers.

Coral Aloe is a South African native with pale gray, fleshy, spineless leaves that can grow to 20 inches long with fine, exotic parallel lines featuring margins running lengthwise. It grows slowly to a closely packed rosette 2 feet tall and wide. Clusters of 1-1/2 inch long coral red to orange flowers are borne on tall, 3 foot stalks and provide nectar for hummingbirds.

For more landscape choices and design ideas to help you create a vibrant, attractive, colorful low water use landscape try the on-line edition of ["Water Wise Landscaping in Chandler"](#).



Water Conservation E-News

This monthly newsletter will help you create stunning landscapes that use less water. Each issue is packed with personalized watering advice, notices about upcoming events, timely tips to maintain a healthy landscape, plus ways to reduce your water bill. Read past issues here - [WaterSaver newsletter](#).

[Sign-Up Now](#)

Sincerely,
Water Conservation Staff

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Questions or comments? We want to hear from you! Contact us at conserve@chandleraz.gov

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