



# WaterSaver Newsletter

January 2012

## New To The Desert?

We do things differently here in the Low Desert. In fact, just about everything is different. While most of the country is wrapped in the frigid temperatures of winter, we are readying our landscapes and gardens for the most colorful and productive seasons of the year. You may want to forget much of what you know about gardening and landscaping 'back home' and start with a clean slate.

- Weather - In the low desert we have a nearly year-round growing season which averages 265 days without frost.
- Water - Our rainfall is scarce and intermittent making supplemental irrigation necessary to maintain many annual flowers, vegetables, and non-native shrubs and trees.
- Soil - Desert soils are generally alkaline (salty), low in organic matter, but rich in nutrients. Chandler soils have a high clay content which holds moisture but compacts easily.
- Plant Types - Our desert environment alters your choice of plants. Most plants you grew back home just aren't happy here. However, there are literally hundreds of desert-adapted choices that thrive in our challenging climate and soils.

Luckily, the Chandler Water Conservation website has a plethora of information to make your landscaping and gardening successful. Visit [www.chandleraz.gov/water](http://www.chandleraz.gov/water)

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## Upcoming Events

- January 21 - [Citrus Clinic- East Valley](#)
- January 28 - [Citrus Clinic - West Valley](#)
- January - 23 [Smartscape](#)
- February 21 - [Water-Wise Vegetable Gardening](#)
- February 25 - [Chandler 'Smart' Landscaping I](#)
- March 3 - [Chandler 'Smart' Landscaping II](#)

See complete schedule at [www.chandleraz.gov/water](http://www.chandleraz.gov/water)



## Monthly Watering Advice

### January

What a great way to start the new year with sunny skies and mild temperatures. Typically we receive ample rain or more this month so use the 'off', 'stop', or 'rain' setting on your controller to stop the watering cycle without disturbing your programs. Then, watch your landscape for dryness to determine when you need to turn the controller back on.

Recommendations below are for plants that are established in the landscape (in the ground about 2 years).

#### Lawn watering:

- Summer grass (Bermuda) - once every 30 days
- Overseeded 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

## Ask A Garden Goddess



### When should I prune my frozen plants?

The Goddess senses you must have Lantana, Bougainvillea or Yellow Bells. No, she's not

Tree watering:

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

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. Request a free copy at [www.chandleraz.gov/water](http://www.chandleraz.gov/water) or visit the interactive Web site at <http://www.wateruseitwisely.com>

Bonus tip: If you need to clear out some of the weeds in your landscape, this is a great time to hand pull them. It's a lot easier to get attached roots pulled out when the soil is moist. Keep in mind weeds compete with landscape plants for water.

psychic, but these plants are typically damaged by frosty nights.

Normally, we wait until mid-to late February or later to prune perennials. If you prune too early new growth can be killed by a late frost. Left on, the 'toasted' parts act like an insulator until temperatures warm up. They also offer shelter and food to our feathered and furry friends.

Email your question to [gardengoddess@chandleraz.gov](mailto:gardengoddess@chandleraz.gov)



## Water Wise Tips



Grandpa always said, "if you talk long enough, someone is bound to listen."

When it comes to water conservation, we can never say enough. If your water bill seems higher than normal, you could have water leaks in or outside your home. Inside your home, the biggest water waster is the toilet. It may surprise you that as much as 30,000 gallons of water a month can be wasted by something as simple as a toilet flapper!

The good news is toilet leaks are easy and inexpensive to repair.

1. First, perform a dye test by placing a dye tablet (provided by your friendly Water Conservation office) in the tank or use 2-3 drops of food coloring. Wait 15 minutes and if the color appears in the bowl, you have a leak.
2. Then check the overflow tube. Water should only be within one-half inch of the top of the tube. If not, make appropriate adjustments.
3. Next, check that the lift chain is not catching on anything.
4. Finally, check the rubber flapper to make sure it is sealing correctly. They often warp after 1-2 years.

Click here for simple ways to [check for toilets leaks](#) as well as [other leaks](#) inside and outside your home.

## Plant of the Month

[Red Eremophila](#) (*Eremophila maculata*)

Often called "Emu bushes", this group of evergreen plants comes from the semi-arid to arid regions of Australia. Most are very drought tolerant, surviving long periods without water and are well suited for our region in the Sonoran Desert.



The lipstick red, tubular flowers of [Red Eremophila](#) begin appearing in January, making this shrub a welcome splash of color in our winter landscapes. By Valentine's Day it reaches its peak but its long bloom period extends through March with occasional re-bloom in May.



Red Eremophila grows to 4 feet by 5 feet with deep green, fragrant foliage and a dense rounded form. It will tolerate temperatures down to 15 degrees, seems unaffected by hot dry summers, thrives in full sun, has no thorns and produces low litter.

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

**Chandler City Council**  
Jay Tibshraeny, Mayor  
Trinity Donovan, Vice Mayor

**Council Members**  
Kevin Hartke  
Rick Heumann  
Matt Orlando  
Jack Sellers  
Jeff Weninger



The WaterSaver newsletter is published by Chandler's Water Conservation office and is just one more way we're providing Chandler utility customers with inspiring ideas at a reduced cost.

You have received this newsletter because you requested a subscription, asked to receive information from us, or have been identified by Water Conservation as someone who could benefit from the information.



Questions or comments? We want to hear from you! Contact us at [conserve@chandleraz.gov](mailto:conserve@chandleraz.gov)

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**Offer Expires: May 3, 2012**