



Chandler • Arizona



## WaterSaver Newsletter

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September 2013

### Friends in Low Places

Friends can help do the heavy work like moving soil or digging, but it's the tiny creatures that labor away behind the scenes that really keep landscapes healthy. Literally, thousands of beneficial insects and creatures play a vital role in your yard's ecosystem; some work their magic in the soil, while others patrol plants for destructive pests.

Most everyone recognizes lady beetles (lady bugs) as being hunters of aphids. But did you know that many others are hard at work keeping pest populations down too? One of the best ways to control pests in your garden is to encourage their natural enemies.



A few beneficials you might want to invite include:

- [Parasitic wasps](#) - tiny, nonstinging adults seek out aphids, whiteflies and caterpillars as a food source for their young.
- Immature [green lacewing flies](#) consume aphids and whiteflies.
- [Big Eyed Bugs](#) capture aphids.
- [Syrphid fly](#) larvae seek out aphids.
- [Beneficial nematodes](#) feast on grubs, tiny crickets and weevils.
- [Lizards](#) and geckos eat small insects.
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Encouraging natural enemies further increases the ecological diversity of your yard. The best way to conserve beneficial insects is to use pesticides only when necessary. If a pesticide must be used, try to select the least toxic material available such as diatomaceous earth, boric acid powder, Bacillus thuringensis (Bt), whitefly sticky traps, soapy water spray, and others. Remember insecticides kill beneficial insects as well as pests.

Follow this link to learn more about [natural enemies](#). If you have questions about your landscape, contact the Water Conservation Office at [conserve@chandleraz.gov](mailto:conserve@chandleraz.gov).

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### Upcoming Events

- September 10**  
[Water Wise Edible Gardening](#)
- September 14**  
[Chandler Smart Landscaping](#)
- September 17**  
[Green Plumbing Solutions](#)
- September 24**  
[Pruning & Maintaining Your Landscape](#)
- October 5**  
[Chandler Smart Landscaping](#)
- October 10**  
[Sprinkler Design & Installation](#)

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



## Monthly Watering Advice

### September

Can you feel a hint of fall in the air? Days are shorter and nights and mornings are cooler. Many of the non-desert plants are starting to perk up, and all plants can be watered less often. To help minimize the impact of the current drought, we are encouraging all water customers to consider limiting, or forgoing, overseeding with winter rye. You can save over 8,000 gallons of water for every 1,000 sq.ft. of grass. Recommendations below are for plants that are established in the landscape (in the ground about 2 years).

#### Lawn watering:

Summer grass (Bermuda) - once every 4 days

Overseeded cool season grass (rye) - 4 times per day for first 7-10 days to germinate, then reduce to once a day for a week, then once every 2 days.

#### If trees and shrubs are on the same valve:

Desert Adapted - once every 18 days

High Water Use - once every 9 days

#### Tree watering:

Desert Adapted - once every 21 days

High Water Use - once every 10 days

#### Shrub watering:

Desert Adapted - once every 16 days

High Water Use - once every 7 days

#### Groundcover and vine watering:

Desert Adapted - once every 16 days

High Water Use - once every 5-6 days

Cacti and succulent watering - once every 28 days

Annuals watering - once every 3-4 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.chandlerzaz.gov/water](http://www.chandlerzaz.gov/water) or visit the interactive web site at <http://www.wateruseitwisely.com> .

Bonus tip: We've developed the [Top 10 reasons to Skip Overseeding](#) this year. It's usually better for the lawn to forego this process 1 out of every 3 years.

Note: These recommendations are a general guideline only and may need to be modified for your specific site conditions.

### Ask A Garden Goddess



### My Yellow Bells are being eaten by something. What is it?

They're baaaack! Yellow Bells and Orange Bells have been targeted by a small caterpillar that munches on tender flower buds and leaves.

The best way to control them is to spray your plants with a product that contains Bt (pronounced Bee Tee) a bacteria (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) that only targets caterpillars. It's safe for humans, pets and fish. (A similar product is used to control mosquitoes in standing water).

Bt is sold under various labels such as Thuricide, Dipel, Safer Caterpillar Killer, etc. Mix according to directions and spray on the plant. Caterpillars eat the treated leaves and die within 3 -4 days. Repeat applications may be necessary.

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



## Water Wise Tips



Grandpa always said "life's got potholes and mud to sling."

It's been raining a bit this summer. Rain always makes plants look better. Sure it washes away the accumulated dust, but summer rainwater also contains a bit of nitrogen, thanks to the lightning that accompanies our monsoon thunderstorms.

Our summer rains usually fall fast. So fast that our clay soils can't soak it up. Instead of watching all that water run off your property, wouldn't it be great if you could slow it's flow down a bit so it could seep down into the soil? Just imagine. Free rainwater available for your landscape plants.

You can do this by creating a simple 'swale'. A swale is not a pothole or trench. Instead it's a shallow but wide depression that can hold water and usually blends in with the contours of your property. Water from gutters can be directed into swales to create passive water-collecting basins around plants.



The soil you excavate when creating a swale can be used to create accent mounds, giving your landscape another dimension.

For more information on how to capture rainwater visit [Harvesting Rainwater for Landscape Use](#).

## Plant of the Month

[Red Yucca](#) (*Hesperaloe parvifolia*)

This attractive accent plant is irresistible to hummingbirds. Its coral red flower spikes appear in the spring and last through fall, reaching heights from 4 to 6 feet. The 3 foot clumps of long, thornless, sword-like leaves work well with gray-leaved shrubs, such as leucophyllum, and look striking when emerging from a patch of flowering groundcovers or wildflowers. While not a true yucca or aloe, it is related to yuccas and agaves, and like its relatives, is a carefree, non-demanding plant. Hesperaloes are extremely hardy, tolerating both heat and cold well in our climate.



[Red yuccas](#) can be used to enhance the landscape and work well around swimming pools. This plant tolerates almost any soil type and temperatures to zero degrees Fahrenheit. It prefers full sun and requires little supplemental water except during the dry months of summer. No pruning is needed except to remove spent flower stalks.



For more landscape choices and design ideas to help you create a vibrant, attractive, colorful low water use landscape try

[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](#)

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Water Conservation Staff

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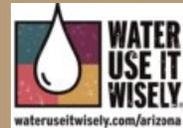
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Questions or comments? We want to hear from you! Contact us at [conserve@chandleraz.gov](mailto:conserve@chandleraz.gov)



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