



Chandler · Arizona



# WaterSaver Newsletter

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July 2015

## How to Train Your Lawn

Summer is here and that means your landscapes' water needs are increasing. One way to make sure your lawn is prepared for our scorching temperatures is to 'train' the roots to grow deep.

Grass roots grow where the soil is moist. If you water your lawn every day, water only moistens the top few inches of soil encouraging shallow roots. By changing your watering schedule a bit you can train your lawn to establish deeper roots that will help it survive the brutal summer heat and hot, drying winds. Watering deeply (to 6 – 8 inches) allows the moisture to remain in the root zone longer which means you don't need to water as often. Irrigating your lawn two to three times a week in summer is all that's needed.

- To tell when your grass needs water do the 'walk test'. Walk on the grass and then look and see if your footprints remain a few minutes later. If so, it's time to water.
- Make sure you only water when the sun is down or during the cooler morning hours to reduce evaporation losses.
- Check your automatic irrigation system for leaks. Turn your controller on manually and walk your property looking for broken sprinkler heads, missing emitters (which will produce small streams of water) or breaks in irrigation piping or tubing. Details on finding irrigation leaks can be found in the [Smart Home Water Guide](#).
- Lush lawns look great, but heavily fertilized lawns use more water and are more susceptible to heat stress.
- Remove only one third of the grass length at each mowing as cutting too much at once stresses the grass.
- Excessive [thatch](#) is usually caused by over fertilizing or over watering and too much will actually repel water.

Follow the link to [How to Train Your Lawn](#) to discover even more ways to make your lawn water efficient. Additional [tips for landscaping](#) can be found on the water conservation web site.

If you have questions about your landscape, contact the Water Conservation Office at [conserve@chandleraz.gov](mailto:conserve@chandleraz.gov) or call 480-782-3583.

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## Upcoming Events

July 10

[Evening Forest Walk](#)

July 11 - 12

[Sweet Corn Extravaganza](#)

July 11

[Learn Your Lizards](#)

July 18-19

[Peach Mania](#)

July 31

[Nature Walk at EEC](#)

July 25

[Butterfly Walk](#)

Thursdays & Saturdays

[Flashlight Tours](#)

See complete schedule at

[www.chandleraz.gov/water](http://www.chandleraz.gov/water)

## Ask A Garden Goddess





## July

Our last significant rain was on April 2nd, 90 days ago. Watering frequencies are the same as for June unless we get some rain. Monsoon rains are localized, so a rain gauge can be helpful. If you receive at least one-half inch of rain, skip an irrigation cycle. Use the 'off' or 'rain' setting on your controller to stop the watering cycle without disturbing your programs. These recommendations are for plants that are established in the landscape (in the ground about 2 years).

### Lawn watering:

Summer grass (Bermuda) - once every 3 days

Overseeded cool season grass (rye) - grass dies out

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

Desert Adapted - once every 14 days

High Water Use - once every 7 days

### Tree watering:

Desert Adapted - once every 16 days

High Water Use - once every 8 days

### Shrub watering:

Desert Adapted - once every 12 days

High Water Use - once every 5 days

### Groundcover and vine watering:

Desert Adapted - once every 12 days

High Water Use - once every 4 days

Cacti and succulent watering - once every 21 days

Annuals watering - once every 2-3 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 [www.wateruseitwisely.com](http://www.wateruseitwisely.com).

Bonus tip: Use a coffee can or other container instead of a rain gauge as long as it has a flat bottom, vertical sides, and is deep enough so drops of water won't splash out. Stabilize the container and place in the open so trees, fences or sprinklers do not affect the amount of water that will accumulate. After a rain, simply use a ruler to measure.

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

## I had a swarm of bees land in my tree. How dangerous are they?

Don't fear the sting! Bees are an important and vital part of our ecosystem. These busy little creatures are responsible for pollinating a large variety of fruits, flowers and vegetables.

Although a swarm of bees may look scary, these bees are not a threat to people or pets. It's only when they're defending a hive that they become aggressive.

Bees in a swarm are surrounding the queen, who sends scouts out to look for a new place to build a hive. They usually move off within 24 hours. To make sure they don't set up housekeeping in your yard, cover holes in irrigation or water meter box tops with a flat rock.

Click here for more information on [bees](#).

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



Bee Swarm

## Water Wise Tips



Grandpa always said "life is only 10% what happens to you, but 90% what you do about it."

July is [Smart Irrigation Month](#), which means it is a great time to do something with your irrigation system.

July and August are the months when Chandler residents are using the most water. This is because up to 70 percent of the monthly water use is going outside where lawns and landscape plants are being heavily irrigated. More often than not, people are giving the plants more water than they really need.

To find out how many minutes and how often to run your

## Plant of the Month

### Desert Ruellia (*Ruellia peninsularis*)

Native to the Baja peninsula, this evergreen shrub has a naturally rounded form, growing quickly to 4 to 5 feet tall and wide. Small, glossy green leaves contrast with its interesting white-grey stems.



Desert Ruellia's purple, one inch wide, bell shaped flowers bloom nearly year round with the peak season running from spring to early summer. Hummingbirds are attracted

irrigation system, [check out this great resource](#) or [request an appointment](#) for a free [water audit](#) with a Chandler Water Conservation Specialist.

The Irrigation Association is a national organization that promotes water efficient irrigation practices to consumers and landscape professionals alike. If you are looking for a landscape professional who is certified in irrigation, [search the Irrigation Association's directory](#) for a list of Arizona contractors.



If you have questions about saving water in your landscape, home, HOA or business, give us a call at 480-782-3580, or email us at [conserve@chandleraz.gov](mailto:conserve@chandleraz.gov)

to the flowers.

[Desert Ruellia](#) (aka Baja Ruellia) is easy to grow in the toughest conditions. Plant in full sun where drainage is good. Established plants require only weekly watering in summer. It will tolerate reflected heat but stem tips can be damaged if temperatures dip below 25 degrees. Except for removing frost damage, this plant needs almost no maintenance.

Note: This plant is a shrub and **NOT** invasive like its relative, *Ruellia brittoniana* (aka Mexican Petunia), which spreads rapidly by underground stems anywhere water is available.



For more landscape choices and design ideas to help you create a vibrant, attractive and 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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Questions or comments? We want to hear from you! Contact us at [conserve@chandleraz.gov](mailto:conserve@chandleraz.gov)

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