



Chandler • Arizona



WaterSaver Newsletter

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March 2015

Mulch Madness

Mulching is one of the easiest things you can do to benefit your yard. What is mulch? Mulch is a layer of material added to the top of the soil surface that can significantly reduce the amount of water needed to sustain a garden or an entire landscape. Mulches also reduce water runoff and help control soil erosion.

There are many benefits that mulch provides. Mulch will keep the roots of plants cool during the blazing heat of the summer. In our dry Arizona climate, mulch is essential to hold moisture in the ground around your plants and slows down the evaporation rate. This means you can water less often.

There are two groups of mulches, **organic** and **inorganic**. Organic mulch includes shredded tree and shrub trimmings, pine needles, straw, hay, etc.

Inorganic mulch refers to materials such as rock and includes crushed granite. They absorb heat and can raise the temperature of both the soil and the surrounding air.

In Chandler, many of the parks use organic mulch in place of crushed granite. Drive through Tumbleweed or Desert Breeze Park and take a look. Who knows, after learning its many benefits, you may decide to substitute organic mulch for crushed granite?

- Organic mulch does not attract termites
- Organic mulch does not attract harmful insects
- Organic mulch is not a fire hazard (rubber mulch is the most hazardous of all tested landscape mulches*)
- After settling (2 -3 weeks), organic mulch will not blow away

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

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Upcoming Events

March 4

[Pruning & Maintaining Your Landscape](#)

March 10

[Basic Yard Makeovers](#)

March 14 & 21

[Create Your Own Oasis](#)

March 24

[Tracking Down Sneaky Leaks](#)

April 2

[Sprinkler Design & Installation](#)

See complete schedule at www.chandleraz.gov/water



Monthly Watering Advice

March

We've had some great rainfall in February and early March, but temperatures are on the increase. Warm days are nudging Bermuda and other cold sensitive plants out of dormancy. These recommendations are for plants that are established in the landscape (in the ground about two years).

Lawn watering:

- Dormant summer grass (Bermuda) - Once every 12 days
- Overseeded cool season grass (rye) - Once every 6 days

If trees and shrubs are on the same valve:

- Desert adapted - Once every 25 days
- High water use - Once every 12 days

Tree watering:

- Desert adapted - Once every 30 days
- High water use - Once every 14 days

Shrub watering:

- Desert adapted - Once every 21 days
- High water use - Once every 10 days

Groundcover and vine watering:

- Desert adapted - Once every 21 days
- High water use - Once every 10 days

Cacti and succulent watering - No water needed

Annuals watering - Once every 5 days

Native wildflowers - Once every 10 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 or visit the interactive web site at www.wateruseitwisely.com.

Bonus tip: Thanks to the rains it will be a great wildflower year. Visit the Desert Botanical Garden website at <http://www.dbg.org> and select "Wildflower InfoSite" on the right menu bar to find reports on statewide wildflower sightings and best places to go.

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

Ask A Garden Goddess



I have weeds growing everywhere. What's the best way to get rid of them?

You're not alone. Weeds are growing fast after the rains and warm temperatures.

There are a few options for control.

- 1) Now that soils are moist you can hand dig or pull them. Try to get the root so they don't grow back.
- 2) You can mow them frequently, keeping them short so they don't flower and go to seed.
- 3) A third option is to use an herbicide that targets the weed. Some are specific for grasses, others kill broadleaf weeds, still others kill both. Follow label directions exactly!

To keep future weeds from sprouting, try a pre-emergent. Spray in spring and fall for best control.

Follow this link for more [weed information](#).

Email your question to GardenGoddess@chandlerzaz.gov

Water Wise Tips



Grandpa always said "To realize the value of ONE MINUTE, ask a person who just missed a train".

This time of year many of us are spending our minutes enjoying the outdoors either by hiking, picnicking, gardening or running. For those of you who are runners, don't forget the [One for Water 4-Miler](#) on March 21, where you can test your skills at chasing down leaks by competing against a running toilet!

This is a fun local race that offers something for everyone - a fast course, desert scenery, fabulous prizes, swag, food, and a "tank chaser" to beat a running toilet. Whether you're an intense or laid back runner, this chip timed 4-mile loop run promises a unique blend of the traditional race with some distinctive moments.

Plus you'll get your hands on the newest and coolest tools to help you find and fix leaks. The fun family festival offers leak-fixing demos, kids activities, music, food and more.



Remember, March 16-22 is [Fix A Leak Week](#).

Give us a call at 480-782-3583 or email conserve@chandleraz.gov to see if we can help you track down sneaky leaks.

Plant of the Month

Chuparosa (*Justicia californica*)

With long, colorful, tubular flowers, [Chuparosa](#) is a hummingbird's delight.



The word chuparosa, Spanish for hummingbird, gives testimony to this shrub's attraction to hummingbirds. Native to the Sonoran Desert, it is wonderfully adapted to xeriscape gardens for color and wildlife. Growing up to 5 feet tall and wide, it can fill a large space. Intense red flowers, or lemon yellow in some forms, are one of its best features, especially during its fall through spring blooming period.

It can survive on rainfall alone in natural desert areas, but maintains a more evergreen appearance with supplemental water during extended, hot, dry periods.

Chuparosa is a great choice near swimming pools or patio areas. Plant in full sun and well-drained soil. [Combining it with other plants](#) in your landscape can create a stunning effect.

Note: The flowers are edible and taste like cucumber!



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](#).

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

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