



WaterSaver Newsletter

December 2012

Winter Landscape Care

Cooler temperatures have arrived with frosty nights and clear, crisp days. Although landscape plants may appear to be resting during this time, below ground it's a different story as the roots of most are still growing. With the right care your landscape will be in great shape for this season.

Here are some simple tips from the City of Chandler Water Conservation office.

- **Adjust Your Watering Schedules** - Deep, infrequent irrigations are always recommended when applying water to your landscape. Dormant Bermuda lawns only need to be watered once a month in the winter. If you have chosen to plant a winter rye lawn, only apply water once every 7 - 14 days; less often if we receive adequate rainfall. Established shrubs will only need water once every 2 to 4 weeks as long as you are watering for at least 2 hours each time.
- **Check Your Irrigation System** - Emitters may become clogged and irrigation lines can develop leaks.
- **Apply Mulches** - They help improve the soil and keep tender roots warmer during the chilly winter months.
- **Weed Control** - Weeds compete for water and nutrients. Remove them by hand or apply safe weed sprays.
- **Don't Fertilize Plants** - it's not necessary when plants are not actively growing. Instead wait until late February or March.
- **Pruning** - For shrubs, wait until new growth has emerged next spring. Deciduous trees can be pruned in January.

Follow this link for more information on [winter landscape care](#). If you have questions on plants for shade visit the Water Conservation web site at www.chandleraz.gov/water, call the office at 480-782-3580 or email us at conserve@chandleraz.gov.



Monthly Watering Advice

December

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Upcoming Events

- December 1 - 30
[Noche de las Luminarias](#)
- December 21
[Downtown Chandler Artwalk](#)
- December 1, 2, 7, 8, 9
[Poinsettia Festival](#)
- December 16
[Tree Tour at Boyce Thompson Arboretum](#)
- Throughout December
[Nature Programs at EEC](#)
- January 19
[East Valley Citrus Clinic](#)
- February 19
[Smartscape Training](#)

See upcoming class schedule at www.chandleraz.gov/water

Ask A Garden Goddess



We have black plastic under our gravel. Is this good?

Black plastic has been promoted and sold as a weed barrier in decomposed granite or gravel landscapes. Unfortunately, it does more harm than good.

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 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

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 or visit the interactive Web site at <http://www.wateruseitwisely.com> .

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/>

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

1. Dirt gathers on top of it and weeds grow anyway.
2. Rainwater is unable to soak into the soil under the plastic and runs off the landscape.
3. Oxygen levels in the soil are reduced and roots suffocate.
4. Instead of growing deeply, roots grow near the surface of the soil where moisture condenses under the plastic.
5. Continual moisture under the plastic encourages molds and bacteria that can affect plant health.
5. An assortment of undesirable insects are drawn to the dark, damp areas just under the plastic.
6. As it ages, black plastic tears and becomes visible above the gravel.

Email your question to GardenGoddess@chandleraz.gov



Water Wise Tips



Grandpa always said 'You can never stop learning'. When it comes to finding and repairing leaks, there is always lots to learn.

For instance, did you know your water meter can help you detect leaks in your water system? It's a handy tool that could save you money and conserve water.

First, locate your meter box. It is generally located near the sidewalk in front of your home in a direct line with the main outside faucet. The cover may have a black circular disc on the lid. The meter uses a straight-reading dial which is read similar to a car's odometer. When water is not being used, nothing on the meter should be moving.

To check for leaks:

- Turn off all inside and outside water faucets.
- Watch the meter for 10 minutes. If the flow indicator moves, then leaks exist on your property and need to be located.
- Check the main meter reading numbers, and come back an hour later after you know no water has been used. If there is a higher reading, there could be a leak.

For more information on detecting leaks visit www.chandleraz.gov/water and follow the link to "How to Check for a Water Leak". If you have unexplained high water use and would like a free water audit, call 480-782-3583.

Plant of the Month Bat-Faced Cuphea (*Cuphea llavea*)

This small, low-growing shrub has lush, deep green foliage with distinctive scarlet red blooms. The "faces" are actually purple parts of petals which look like bat faces with large red Mickey Mouse ears!



Traditionally, the color red is associated with energy, danger, strength, power, dominance as well as passion, desire, and love. Use red sparingly in landscapes; a little does a great job to liven up a yard, create a focal point or to draw attention away from an eyesore, but too much can be overpowering.

[Bat-faced cuphea](#) prefers a spot in the landscape that gets regular water in the summer to keep it looking its best, and a location with filtered shade or shade especially on hot summer afternoons. Flowers appear spring, summer and fall and attract hummingbirds. Place it near a seating area where the unusual faces can be seen easily. It also does well in containers. Hardy to the mid 20's. See header above for more flowers.



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](#)

Sincerely,
Water Conservation Staff

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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



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