



Chandler • Arizona



WaterSaver Newsletter

February 2012

Indecent Exposure

Here in the Southwest our freezing winter nights and scorching summer days can take its toll on people and plants. Our landscape plants must cope with the environment around them and can suffer from frost or sun damage, as well as water stress, if they are excessively or incorrectly pruned. Plants actually need more water and nutrients to recover from pruning. Here are a few pruning mistakes that should be avoided

- Timing - If your plants suffered frost damage wait until late February or early March before removing the 'toasted' parts.
- Extreme Pruning - Never remove more than 25% in any year and avoid stripping interior branches from trees (known as lion-tailing) which makes branches more vulnerable to failure.
- Geometric Shapes - Shaping shrubs into round, cylinder or cupcake shapes requires repeated pruning that destroys their shape and blooming potential. Use selective pruning methods to reduce the size but retain the plants natural shape.
- Feather Dusters - Palm trees are another victim of excessive pruning. Only the lower leaves which have turned brown or are yellowing, should be removed. All green leaves provide a valuable source of energy for the plant.
- Pineapple Fields - Although they may resemble pineapples, the plants being pruned into these shapes are striking accents known as Desert Spoons, yuccas or agaves. Allow lower leaves to remain to protect them from cold and reflected heat.

Need more information? Join us for the free Water Conservation workshop on pruning March 6. Register on line at www.chandleraz.gov/water



Monthly Watering Advice

February

January's rainfall was below normal this year heralding a return of La Nina weather conditions. Winter rye or annual flowers need the most frequent watering and may require some supplemental watering even if we do receive scattered showers this month. Recommendations below are for plants that are established in the landscape (in the ground about two years).

Lawn watering:

- Summer grass (Bermuda) - once every 21 days
- Overseeded cool season grass (rye) - once every 10 days

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Upcoming Events

February 21 -

[Water Wise Vegetable Gardening](#)

February 25 -

[Chandler Smart Landscaping I](#)

March 3 -

[Chandler Smart Landscaping II](#)

March 6 -

[Pruning and Maintaining Your Landscape](#)

See complete schedule at www.chandleraz.gov/water

Ask A Garden Goddess



What's the best way attract hummingbirds to my yard?

Two species of hummingbirds make Chandler their year round home and several others

If trees and shrubs are on the same valve:

Desert Adapted - once every 30 days

High Water Use - once every 14 days

Tree watering:

Desert Adapted - once every 40 days

High Water Use - once every 18 days

Shrub watering:

Desert Adapted - once every 25 days

High Water Use - once every 12 days

Groundcover and vine watering:

Desert Adapted - once every 24 days

High Water Use - once every 12 days

Cacti and succulent watering - no water needed

Annuals watering - once every 7 days

Wildflower watering - once every 12 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 or download a free copy at www.chandleraz.gov/water or visit the interactive Web site at <http://www.wateruseitwisely.com>

Bonus tip: If plants have been damaged by cold, wait until danger of frost has passed (about Feb. 15) and/or new growth has emerged before pruning off the damaged areas. The frosted plant parts will help protect the remainder of the plant.

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

migrate through our area on their way to and from Mexico and Central America. Few people realize that they need 50% protein in their diet that they can't get from feeders. By using hummingbird-friendly plants you'll keep them healthy and happy. Not sure what to plant? Contact the water conservation office for a list of easy-to-grow selections.

If you insist on using hummingbird feeders, be sure to keep the nectar fresh by changing it daily. No need to purchase nectar powders, you can make your own by mixing ¼ cup of white sugar in one cup of water. Bring to a boil (to kill bacteria), let it cool and pour in your favorite feeder.

Email your question to garden goddess@chandleraz.gov



Water Wise Tips



Grandpa always said "A man of words and not of deeds is like a garden full of weeds".

December rains, showers in early January and cool temperatures have produced WEEDS!!!! and lots of 'em.

The gardener's definition of a weed is a plant growing where you don't want it to and in case you haven't noticed, weeds are sprouting up just about everywhere. Here are some tips on controlling weeds that are growing and preventing them in the future.

- Remove weeds when they are small. Use sharp hoes, shovels, or hand pulling. C'mon, this is good exercise - therapeutic even.
- Post-emergent herbicides will kill existing weeds. Non-selective products kill all types of weeds. Some selective herbicides work on grass type weeds while others work best on broadleaf weeds.
- Pre-emergents prevent weeds from sprouting in the future. They work great on gravel areas.
- Always follow label directions exactly.

Follow this link for more details on [weed control](#) as well as photos of common weeds.

Plant of the Month

[Firecracker Penstemon](#)
(*Penstemon eatonii*)

With many beautiful varieties of penstemon, it is hard to recommend just one. These perennials are spectacular in bloom, with their trumpet shaped flowers ranging in color from orange to red, to purple, to white and everything in between. Hummingbirds can't resist their nectar laden flowers.



Firecracker penstemon's scarlet flowers cover the 1 to 2 foot flower stalks from late winter through spring. After the bloom season, they reseed themselves readily. Cut the flower stalks to the basal rosette of leaves before seed pods open to control reseeding. Or to collect the seeds, wait until the flower stalk dries and then cut, storing them in paper bags until the seed pods open. Deep, infrequent watering in the summer and good drainage are essential.



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

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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

Save

Bring this coupon to any free City of Chandler water conservation class or workshop to receive a free gift.

(One per resident, please)

Offer Expires: May 3, 2012