



Chandler • Arizona



WaterSaver Newsletter

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August 2013

Branching Out

Have you ever noticed how a little shade makes a huge difference on a hot summer day? Ask any driver trying to squeeze into a shaded parking spot. Here shade can be the difference between your car being 115 degrees inside or 154 degrees in the sun!

The solution? Plant trees. Trees strategically placed on east and west sides can provide shade and shrink a building's air-conditioning bill by up to 12 percent. On a summer afternoon, the brick front of a building in Chandler can be 135 degrees in the sun - and just 101 degrees in the shade.

Trees pack a one-two punch: Their shade keeps surfaces from warming up, while they act as natural evaporative coolers by releasing water vapor from their leaves, a process known as transpiration. When it comes to the number of trees planted in the metro Phoenix area, trees are seriously lacking. The tree cover in Phoenix is estimated at a skimpy 13 percent, according to Chris Martin, professor of urban horticulture at Arizona State University.

No need to plant high water using varieties of trees like ash, mulberry, cottonwood or ficus. Instead, there are many trees that thrive in our alkaline soils and challenging climate. [Mesquites](#), [palo verdes](#), [acacias](#) and other desert adapted trees actually prefer deep and infrequent irrigation. The shade they provide can create amazingly cool spaces and reduce the irrigation needs for the rest of the landscape.

Trees can be planted almost any time in the low desert but avoiding the blistering summer heat is encouraged. Plan now to install trees when cooler temperatures arrive. Details on tree choices including where and how to plant are available in [Branching Out](#).

If you have questions about trees or watering your landscape, contact the Water Conservation Office at conserve@chandleraz.gov.

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Upcoming Events

- August
- [Flashlight Tours at Desert Botanical Garden](#)
- August
- [Botanical Blacksmiths - Flagstaff Arboretum](#)
- August
- [Apple Annie's Orchard](#)
- [Peach Mania, Willcox](#)
- August 24
- [Guided Butterfly Walk at Boyce Thompson Arboretum](#)
- August 27
- [Basic Yard Makeovers](#)
- September 10
- [Water Wise Edible Gardening](#)

See complete schedule at www.chandleraz.gov/water



Monthly Watering Advice

August

Ask A Garden Goddess



It's the dog days of summer, and even though it feels uncomfortable to us, the higher humidity makes it easier for plants. A few monsoons with lightning have stormed through adding to the potential for power outages. Make sure you've replaced your battery in your irrigation timer within the past year (if it has that option). Battery backup will maintain your programs and clock during an outage. These recommendations are for plants that are established in the landscape (in the ground about 2 years).

Lawn watering:

- Summer grass (Bermuda) - once every 3-4 days
- Overseeded cool season grass (rye) - grass dies out

If trees and shrubs are on the same valve:

- Desert Adapted - once every 15 days
- High Water Use - once every 8 days

Tree watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 17 days
- High Water Use - once every 9 days

Shrub watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 13 days
- High Water Use - once every 6 days

Groundcover and vine watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 12 days
- High Water Use - once every 5 days

Cacti and succulent watering - once every 22 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 or visit the interactive web site at <http://www.wateruseitwisely.com> .

Bonus tip: Mowing your lawn higher than usual will help make it more drought tolerant during hot summer days. The rule of thumb is to never cut more than 1/3 of the total blade. Higher mowing heights help roots grow deeper and shade the soil slowing evaporation. The deeper the root system, the more drought-tolerant the turf becomes. Read more tips in [Desert Lawn Care](#).

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

How do I get rid of scorpions in and around my home?

Scorpions can be pretty scary if you happen to meet one. Try to remember they play a vital role in the desert ecosystem. They are excellent predators of a variety of insects like crickets, cockroaches, spiders, centipedes, and other scorpions, and typically hunt at night.

Scorpions are almost impossible to manage with insecticides alone. Therefore, the first control strategy is to modify the area surrounding a house or structure by removing trash, installing weather stripping and plugging holes and cracks. Eliminating their food source should send them elsewhere in search of an easy meal. Read the [U of A publication on Scorpions](#) for more information.

Email your question to GardenGoddess@chandleraz.gov



Water Wise Tips



Grandpa always said "The world is round, and the place which may seem like the end may also be only the beginning."

Natural wetlands, marshes, swamps, and bogs play an important role in protecting water quality. Artificial or 'constructed' wetland systems mimic the treatment that occurs in nature by relying on plants and a combination of naturally occurring biological, chemical and physical processes to remove pollutants from the water. Constructed wetland systems may seem like the end of wastewater treatment but are really just the beginning of the recycling process.

Wetlands within an arid environment are rare with natural [riparian areas](#) totalling less than 1% of all land in Arizona. Riparian zones are called "ribbons of life," since they support the most productive habitats in North America and provide essential migration routes.

In Chandler, [Veterans Oasis Park](#) covers 113 acres and features both lush wetland and arid habitat suitable for the diverse plants and wildlife of the Sonoran Desert. This

Plant of the Month

[San Marcos Hibiscus](#) (*Gossypium harknessii*)

San Marcos Hibiscus is a perfect choice for Southwest landscapes. Native to Baja, Mexico it thrives in full sun or reflected heat locations. Its evergreen, glossy, heart shaped leaves are a distinguishing feature. Reaching 3 - 4 feet tall and 5 - 6 feet wide in a rounded dark green mound, this shrub also has stunning two inch wide yellow flowers from spring through fall. A distinctive maroon spot at the base of each petal marks the throat of the blossom (see header above). It is easy to grow and prefers native soils without added organic matter and deep infrequent irrigations.



[San Marcos Hibiscus](#) is perfect for a mini-oasis or courtyard and its deep green leaves create a striking contrast to gray leaved plants. Although above ground stems may be damaged by temperatures below 25 degrees, new shoots emerge from the roots with warm weather.

"non-traditional" facility uses shallow groundwater recharge basins to infiltrate high quality reclaimed water into the subsurface aquifer for storage and recovery. The continuous flow of reclaimed water to the ponds helps to maintain a healthy wetlands ecosystem.



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.](#)

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

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