



CURRENT NEWS

April 2010

THE
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DIT

PASADENA CITY COUNCIL RECENTLY ADOPTED a Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, which is modeled after one crafted and mandated by the State of California.

Effective this year, the ordinance applies to any Pasadena business or institution that renovates or newly installs landscaping of 2,500 square feet or more. It also affects single family homes in Pasadena that renovate or newly install landscaping of 5,000 square feet or more.

The new procedures also require affected property owners to submit a Landscape Documentation Package, explains PWP Water Conservation Manager Nancy Long, which includes project information, a soil management report, grading and irrigation plans.

As a condition for approval of a building permit, applicants must also provide a water "budget" for their new projects based on the square footage of the landscaped area, types of plants and climate. The budget should take into account all planting areas and turf, plus pools and water features, synthetic grass, edible plants and parkways.

Under the new ordinance, existing golf courses, parks, school fields and residential properties of one acre or more will also be required to set a water budget based on the State's formula for maximum applied water allowance (MAWA).

"Landscaping accounts for over half of Pasadena's water use, and there's a lot of waste," Long said. "This ordinance is just one of the many ways the city is setting a course toward sustainable water use."

LIVE WIRE DIALOGUE

"NATURESCAPING" – or landscaping with native plants – is gaining attention as California grapples with water supply issues.

"Drought conditions are normal in Southern California, and natives have adapted to very low rainfall levels," explains Stephanie Higgins of the Theodore Payne Foundation, a Sun Valley non-profit native plant nursery and education center. "They use, on average, one-seventh the water of most non-natives."

Year-round, the nursery offers more than 400 species of native groundcovers, shrubs and trees for sale, most of which are drought-tolerant and perfect for Pasadena landscapes, she said.

In addition to water savings, natives are very low maintenance, she noted. "Natives really don't require any fertilizers or pesticides. You don't

have to do anything to the soil, correct mulching takes care of weeds, and lots of pruning isn't necessary if you put the right size plant in each spot. If you plan carefully," she added, "you can have flowers and greenery year-round."

"Even more crucial, when you plant natives you restore the ecosystem," she said. "It brings back the insects and butterflies and birds. It's a whole cycle and native plants restore the balance."

For tips on native gardening, a native plant "library," calendar of classes, on-line store and more, visit www.theodorepayne.org





DEAR SCOTT



With an MBA from Loyola Marymount, PWP Customer Relations Manager Scott Ushijima has served the city of Pasadena since 1993.

Can I sell or exhibit my company's green product at the city's Greening the Earth Day Festival?

The City is now allowing vendors to have point-of-sale for their green products and services at its annual Greening the Earth Day Festival, Saturday, April 24 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Memorial Park. Nearly 5000 visitors passed through last year's festival to learn more about green living products, water and energy efficiency, solar PV systems, recycling, organic farming and more. The festival also draws in crowds with live music, dance performances, children's arts activities, refreshments and a bicycle tour. Visit www.PWPweb.com/EarthDay to register as an exhibitor or call (626) 744-4721 for details.

How is PWP pursuing more green power sources?

PWP's goal is to meet 40 percent of Pasadena's energy needs with green power by 2020. Two new projects will help. We started receiving our first energy delivery from the Milford Wind Corridor, the largest renewable energy plant in Utah, last month. The plant produces 203.5 megawatts of energy, or enough to

power 45,000 homes. PWP signed a 20-year agreement for a 5-megawatt share in 2007, and the power will soon be relayed to Pasadena via existing transmission lines. We are also expecting energy deliveries from the Ameresco Chiquita Canyon Landfill gas-to-energy plant in Valencia, this month, in which PWP has secured a 6.67-megawatt share. The facility will capture methane, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that are naturally generated as trash decomposes, transforming them into usable energy. PWP business owners can switch to 100% green power for an additional energy charge of just 2.5 cents per kilowatt hour.

What is the city's stance on converting to synthetic turf?

Synthetic turf is just one tool Pasadena is using to reduce its water use at parks, libraries, medians and sports fields citywide. In addition to native landscaping and efficient irrigation, the city's Public Works Department recently installed synthetic turf on the playing fields at Robinson Park. The Pasadena City Council approved a second order, from Fieldturf USA, Inc., for the soccer field at Villa Parke, to be installed this summer. Available in many styles, synthetic saves water, requires little maintenance, can withstand heavy use and is perfect for shady or hard-to-reach locations. PWP offers a rebate of 60 cents per square foot; visit www.PWPweb.com/Rebates for details.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Rebates & Conservation

626.744.6970

Billing & Service

626.744.4005

Water Emergencies

626.744.4138

Power Emergencies

626.744.4673



CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT



Don Reining (R) worked with Jose Espinoza, Head Gardener for the Monte Vista Grove Homes, to create a water-wise memorial garden for his late wife, Jane Ann.

WHEN DON REINING TRANSFORMED an unused putting green at Monte Vista Grove Homes into a beautiful, living memorial for his wife, an idea took root. The Jane Ann Reining Cactus Garden soon inspired the facility to expand its water-wise landscapes.

Designed in 1924 by famed architect Myron Hunt, the long-term care facility at 2889 San Pasqual St. offers 94 apartments, 16 assisted-living units and a 40-bed skilled nursing facility. Over 13 acres, the expansive grounds feature colorful, varied landscaping, a koi pond, swimming pool, spa and exercise facility.

As exemplified by the retirement community's active Conservation Committee led by Mae Gautier and Dick Dosker, "our residents share a deep concern for the planet and its resources," said Executive Director Deborah Herbert.

Mr. Reining's water-saving project inspired residents to invite a speaker from the Theodore Payne Foundation to explain the benefits of California native plants. Meanwhile, long-time head gardener Jose Espinoza, who has always taken great care and pride in the lush-but-thirsty grounds, began gleaned water-saving gardening tips from Mr.

Reining, the Theodore Payne Foundation and water-wise landscaping classes offered by PWP.

With a new perspective, Espinoza and his crew soon transformed the front of the administration building into a water-wise oasis, with green cloud, heavenly cloud, cimarron and petite butterfly plants, drip irrigation and a bubbling fountain.

"Jose is now very proud of the fact that we are saving so much water," Herbert said, "and enjoys very much inspiring the residents to do the same." Several have begun transforming their own plots into native gardens, she noted, and the MVGH board is setting aside funds for financial assistance.

The landscape projects so far have cut water use by 10 percent, Herbert said, or about 11,873 gallons of water yearly. What's

more, the landscaping requires less maintenance, is designed to attract birds and butterflies and has spurred dozens of compliments.

"The beautiful grounds of MVGH have long provided a sanctuary for retirees, those healing from an illness, families and friends," she said. "Now [the grounds] are also more interesting and environmentally responsible. [Our residents] feel a great responsibility to leave something for the next generation."

For advice, classes and rebates for water-wise landscaping, visit www.PasadenaSavesWater.com or www.bewaterwise.com



MVGH Executive Director Deborah Herbert takes an active role in supporting the many conservation projects embraced by residents and facilities personnel at the long-term care facility.



TIPS FOR BOTTOM-LINE SAVINGS

NATIVE PLANTS AND EFFICIENT IRRIGATION are great for conserving water. But you can do even more to cut waste and protect the environment with the latest techniques in "sustainable landscaping."

Permeable paving, as opposed to non-permeable surfaces like concrete and asphalt, reduces runoff and allows rain water to soak into the groundwater table. Used more and more for roads, parking lots, public plazas, patios and walkways, permeable materials include pervious concrete, porous asphalt, paving stones and bricks.

Maximize your water supply after rainstorms by creating bio-swales or rain gardens. A bio-swale is a shallow channel that helps capture runoff. Planted with native grasses and

perennials, they're often installed next to paved surfaces, like parking lots, and help to filter out oil, sediment and pollutants. A rain garden is similar, designed to take advantage of rainfall and runoff. Planted close to downspouts or paved surfaces, rain gardens help to slow down the flow of stormwater to let it percolate into the ground. Rain garden plants, such as ferns, violets and daylilies, are chosen to withstand extreme moisture and the concentration of nutrients normally found in stormwater.

Planning a landscape redesign? Contact the Planning Department's Sustainability Section to learn about best practices and compliance with new sustainable design ordinances. Call 744-3726.

THE CONDUIT

April 2010

Exhibit Your Company's Green Products and Programs at Pasadena's Earth Day Festival!

Saturday, April 24, 2010 • 10 am to 4 pm



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