

Tips for Starting a Waterwise Garden

Create a General Plan For Your Different Garden Areas-

Have a realistic budget. This will require some homework.

You will need design and installation of plants, irrigation system, and hardscape.

Plan your zones for efficient watering.

Know how quickly you want to have a mature garden.

How to Keep Costs Down-

Take a class to design your own garden. Go to nurseries with questions. Get a consultation instead of a design if you think you just need some advice.

Places like the Water Conservation Garden have students for hire and classes.

Irrigation and hardscape are more involved, so don't cut corners. Go to a place like Grangetto's or Hydroscape that specialize, to get ideas and learn.

Being patient saves money. That means buying 1 gal pots instead of 5 or 15 gal.

You may be surprised how fast some things grow.

How to Prepare the Area-

1)remove the plants, 2)water, 3)fertilize and make sure to kill off anything else that comes up again. Roundup helps. Bring in topsoil if you need it. And mulch with bark or rock.

Put in the irrigation system and any hardscape-

Make sure you are able to catch runoff. Use drip when possible. Be aware of slopes to deal with run off. Know how big your plants will get so they work with the irrigation system you have in mind. Specially be conscious of where large plants end up. You want to develop curb appeal so you probably don't want large plant by the sidewalks.

Color & Texture-

Be aware that color and textures are important especially when things are not in their major bloom cycle. If possible know what the plant looks like throughout the year. You may not like the way it looks during some times of the year and may decide not to plant it.

Growth-

Many drought tolerant plants grow fast in spring. Others many take longer. Plants can surprise you. They can grow bigger than expected or smaller. It's not always predictable. Using drip eliminates some future irrigation problems when plants can block the sprinklers.

Plant at the right time of year-

The heat of the summer or during a Santa Ana is probably not the best time to plant. Know if the plants need fertilizer. Most drought tolerant or native plants don't. Over-fertilizing can make them grow too fast and can shorten their live span.

Smaller perennials may only last 3-4 years. Expect to replace some plants periodically. And don't forget to prune, or some plants get very leggy or don't bloom well.

Waterwise landscapes can also include fruit trees and vegetable gardens with a well designed irrigation system. This is sustainable gardening.

Gardens evolve-

Things will change over time, particularly size and shading. If you start small and don't like all the empty space put in some drought tolerant annuals or inexpensive plants like geraniums.

Two websites to calculate watering by zipcode:

www.sandiego.gov/water/conservation

www.bewaterwise.com

<http://cesandiego.ucdavis.edu/>

www.ipm.ucdavis.edu - pest management

www.californianativeplants.com Tree of Life Nursery

www.daylilyhill.com

www.highcountrygardens.com

www.mastergardenerssandiego.org -answers questions and more

www.briggstree.com

www.laspilitas.com -natives

www.cityfarmersnursery.com/index.html

www.barrelandsbranches.com

www.pearsonsgardens.com -herb farm

www.simpsonsnursery.com

www.grangettos.com -irrigation specialists and farm supplies

www.hydroscape.com - irrigation specialists

Nurseries close to Scripps Ranch

www.miramarnurseries.com/index.shtml

www.walterandersen.com

www.armstronggarden.com

www.evergreennursery.com

www.powaynursery.com

Daniel's Specialty nursery-16869 Rio Maria Road

Lakeside, California 92040 associated with GoSucculent.com

Great Local Places to visit for ideas:

www.thegarden.org Water Conservation Garden

www.qbgardens.org Quail Botanical Garden

www.aguahedionda.org Agua Hedionda Discovery Center in Carlsbad

Good Books;

California Gardener's Guide Volume II- Nan Sterman

Bruce and Sharon Asakawa's -California Gardener's Guide

Debra Lee Baldwin's Designing with Succulents

Plants we used in our garden (these generally do well in Scripps Ranch):

Salvias, aloes and agaves, bush germander, Mexican bird of paradise, crape myrtle,

Mexican marigold, jacaranda, calandrinia, fairy duster, daylilies, barleria, lantana,

succulents and cactus.