

pipeline



FALL 2016

A NEWSLETTER FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT



Otay Water District Customers Continue to Conserve WE DID IT; WE MET OUR CONSERVATION TARGETS!

Through Otay Water District's conservation efforts, customers exceeded the State Water Resources Control Board's mandated 20 percent target set in May 2015, averaging 22 percent from June 2015 through January 2016, compared to the State's 2013 baseline. Beginning in February 2016, the State Board reduced Otay's conservation target to 12 percent. As a result, Otay's potable water use decreased by 18 percent from June 2015 through October 2016, beating the State's targets.

Otay's water supplier, the San Diego County Water Authority, has certified that it has sufficient water supplies to meet the demands of its member agencies, even during three years of drought. To help increase the region's water supply, the Carlsbad Desalination Plant was built and has been producing water since early 2016.

Otay encourages customers to continue to do their part to save water. Although water conservation is now voluntary, excessive waste and runoff are still prohibited. For a list of water-saving practices that remain in effect, visit otaywater.gov/conservation.

While no mandatory water-use reduction targets are expected through the end of this calendar year, the State Board is scheduled to reconsider its emergency drought response regulations in January 2017. The State Board has said it will evaluate statewide rain and snow levels and conservation efforts in determining whether any modifications are needed to the regulation.

Thank you for your continued support of water conservation in Otay's service area and the San Diego region!

Otay Water District Landscape Contest Winners Honored

Otay Water District recently honored the winners of the 2016 California-Friendly Landscape Contest who best exemplified the beauty of low water-use gardening in the district.

The landscape contest judging committee selected Barbara and Nick Amalfitano of Bonita as "Best in District" for their impressive design and incorporation of low water-use plants. Contest participants were critiqued on their landscape's overall attractiveness, plant selection, design, and maintenance and irrigation methods used.

In 2010, the Amalfitanos also participated in a local turf rebate program to replace their front and back lawn with at least 50 percent of low water-use plants. Without hiring a professional landscaper, they removed the grass themselves and integrated drought tolerant plants. Their plant palette included

lady bank roses, salvia, calandrinia, pincushion, cactus, green bells, and disney.

The Amalfitanos' goal was to create a landscape that retained water without runoff. They said this resulted in a 78 percent reduction in water use, compared to their highest use prior to replacing their lawn. With the original sprinkler system still in place, they now water their back lawn once or twice a week in the summer. Meanwhile, in the winter, they turn off the sprinklers and hand water their garden four or five times a week using water from their three rain barrels.

"We have to use water to keep everything alive, but we're using the least amount possible to keep our yard looking as nice as it does," said Barbara.

Ten winners from each of the participating agencies won water conservation related

prizes, including a \$250 check, certificate of recognition, and laminated photo of the winner's landscape. Photos of the winning landscapes can be viewed on the contest's website at www.landscapecontest.com/winners.





Otay Water District Meets Water Quality Standards for Chromium-6 Levels

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) recently released a report titled Erin Brockovich Carcinogen in Tap Water of More Than 200 million Americans. Otay Water District customers may be wondering, "Is my water safe to drink?"

The nonprofit organization's study analyzed chromium-6 sampling data collected by water systems throughout the U.S. between 2013 and 2015, and found that approximately 75 percent of the samples tested contained chromium-6 at levels at or above California's Public Health Goal (PHG) of 0.02 parts per billion.

It is important to note that the State of California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment sets the Public Health Goal for known carcinogens such as chromium-6, "at a level that not more than one person in a population of one million people drinking the water daily for 70 years would be expected to develop cancer as a result of exposure to that chemical."

The Otay Water District is under the requirements of the Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), which are standards set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for drinking water quality. An MCL is the legal threshold limit on the amount of a substance that is allowed in public water systems under the Safe Drinking Water Act. For chromium-6, the legal threshold is 10.0 parts per billion.

Otay purchases its treated water from the San Diego County Water Authority, Helix Water District, and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. These agencies monitor for chromium-6 annually. The most recent test results from the 2015 Water Quality reports were from Non Detected (ND) to 0.04 parts per billion. Sampling results within Otay's service area between August 2013 to May 2014 ranged from 0.04 to 0.07 parts per billion, which are more than 100 times less than MCL.

For more information on Otay's water quality, visit otaywater.gov.

Leak Detection Surveys Begin in January

Through the Otay Water District's Leak Detection Program, workers are expected to begin surveying your community on Jan. 18, 2017. This program is part of the District's preventative maintenance program to safeguard water supply, reduce water loss, and help keep rates low.

Ensuring water system reliability helps save water through the operation of this program. Using state-of-the-art equipment, the District's contractor will inspect the water distribution system for leaks in pipelines, meters, and valves. The equipment is designed to "listen" for leaks and can pinpoint the location of even the smallest water leak.

You will see workers lifting water meter covers in front of the home or business,

inspecting contents, and attaching equipment to water meters or valves. Workers will carry company identification. They will not need or ask for entry to any home or business. When a leak is suspected, a District employee will contact that customer and advise them of the leak.

Surveys will typically take place Monday through Friday, between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., but may take place during early mornings, evenings, or weekends.

District staff will also call and/or email customers in advance as a reminder that the surveys will begin on Jan. 18. For questions, please call 619-670-2222.



OTAY WATER DISTRICT - Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 3:30 p.m. in the Board meeting room. The public is encouraged to attend at 2554 Sweetwater Springs Boulevard, Spring Valley, CA.

President
Mark Robak, Division 5
OtayWater@cox.net

Vice President
Tim Smith, Division 1
tsmith@otaywater.gov

Treasurer
Mitch Thompson, Division 2
mthompson@otaywater.gov

Board Member
Gary Croucher, Division 3
gcroucher@otaywater.gov

Board Member
Hector Gastelum, Division 4
hector@otaywater.gov



For class information, visit
thegarden.org



ONGOING EVENTS

Ask the Designer: Professional Landscape Design Consultations

The Garden offers 45-minute landscape consultations for residents looking to make changes to their landscape to incorporate water-wise plants. Call 619-660-0614 ext. 10 to schedule. Cost: \$60 for members, \$75 for non-members.

Free Docent Led Tours, SAT 10:30 a.m.

Enjoy an informative walk through The Garden with a docent tour guide to be inspired to create a water-wise landscape of your own. Check the website for special themed tours.

Ms. Smarty-Plants School Tours and Assembly Program

Calling all kid groups! Join Ms. Smarty-Plants™ as she takes you on a magical, fun and interactive journey through plant adaptations, the water cycle, conservation, and more. Become a Ms. Smarty-Plants™ Earth Hero! To book an educational tour of The Garden or a school assembly program, contact Jillian Quint at 619-660-6841 x16.

TRIM IRRIGATION TIMES TO LIVE WATER SMART

It's time to put away the sunscreen, sunbrellas, and summer water-use habits. Plants typically need less water as the days get shorter in time and cooler in temperature, making this the right time to cut your irrigation schedule.



Outdoor watering accounts for more than 50 percent of a typical household's water use in California. Seasonal adjustments to irrigation controllers can reduce water waste and lead to healthier landscapes.

An important related water-saving practice this time of year is turning off irrigation systems when rainstorms are predicted and leaving them off for at least 48 hours after significant rainfall.

The San Diego County Water Authority offers a free calculator at WaterSmartSD.org/water-calculator to help residents estimate how much water they use based on a series of questions about their water consumption. It also identifies specific areas for improving overall household water-use efficiency indoors and outdoors.

WaterSmartSD.org is filled with information about how to maximize water-use efficiency. It includes incentives, tools and classes designed to inspire, educate, and empower homeowners to Live WaterSmart in their homes and gardens.

Feasting Through Fall

It is always a bit sad to pick the last of the summer's tomatoes, squash, pumpkins and eggplants. These are my favorite vegetables, in part because of their flavors and in part because they are just so beautiful when they ripen red, orange, yellow, and purple. But then, I remind myself about all the wonderful vegetables that are planted now to eat through fall, winter, and early spring.

As a rule of thumb, any plant whose fruits we eat (botanically, anything with seeds is a fruit, so tomatoes, squash, eggplant, pumpkins, and peppers are fruits) need the long, hot months of summer to ripen, so we plant those in early spring for summer picking.

From fall through early spring, we grow and eat leaves (lettuces, spinach, kale, cabbage), stems (leeks, celery, kohlrabi) roots (carrots, beets, radishes), and so on. We eat the developing flower stalks of broccoli and cauliflower.

It's time, then, to start those fall veggies. Root vegetables like radishes, carrots, turnips, and beets are best planted from seed, directly into your garden bed or container. Whether you grow in the ground or in raised beds (which is the preferred backyard method in our area), dig in plenty of compost first and dampen the soil.

Carrot seeds and other tiny seeds are hard to spread evenly over a garden bed. So try this; mix the seeds with dry construction sand (not playground sand) or dried coffee grounds in a pint-sized yogurt or cottage cheese container, Mix about one-part seeds to four-parts sand or coffee grounds. Then, scatter the seed mixture over the prepared bed.

Sprinkle a very thin layer of soil over the seeds, with seeds this small, if they are planted much deeper, they might not germinate. Press the soil surface gently with a flat board or the heel of your hand – that ensures that seeds and soil fuse together.

Vegetables that are not root vegetables can be planted from seed or as seedlings. Independent nurseries (those that are locally owned) offer a surprising selection of varieties. Some farmer's market vendors sell seedlings as well.

I like to start my own seedlings in sterilized plastic six packs or four packs saved from past seedling purchases. I also use pint yogurt or cottage cheese containers that I sterilize too. To sterilize, clean the containers first, then soak for about 20 minutes in a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water.

I never start seeds in egg cartons. There's not room for enough soil and it is very hard to keep cardboard egg cartons from drying out too quickly.

If you are planting seeds into containers, use brand new seed starting mix rather than in potting soil and don't recycle old seed starting mix. Fill the containers with seed starting mix, then dampen it. Label the containers, then plant the seeds.

After you plant seeds, put the containers outside in spot that gets part day sun and is protected from critters. It is best if they are in a place where you can keep an eye on them too. To water, fill a basin of water with an inch or two of water, then set the containers into the basin. Let them sit until the water wicks to the top, then remove them to drain.

When the seedlings are about six weeks old, they should be large enough to be planted in the garden.

To plant seeds directly in the ground or into a raised bed, read the seed packet for the ideal planting depth and width.

As your vegetables grow, fertilize with organic vegetable food. Mulch them with straw and have fun growing your own cool weather feast.

Nan Sterman is a garden expert, author, designer, and educator. Nan leads international garden tours and hosts the show *A Growing Passion* on KPBS TV. www.plantsoup.com

Los clientes del Distrito de Agua de Otay Continúan Ahorrando Agua ¡ALCANZAMOS NUESTRAS METAS DE CONSERVACIÓN!

Debido a los grandes esfuerzos que ha realizado el Distrito de Agua de Otay nuestros clientes sobrepasaron la meta de conservación de agua obligatoria del 20 por ciento que estableció el Consejo de Control de Recursos de Agua del Estado en mayo de 2015 promediando un 22 por ciento desde junio de 2015 hasta enero de 2016 comparado con la base de referencia del estado en 2013. A partir de febrero de 2016 el Consejo Estatal redujo la meta de conservación a 12 por ciento. Como resultado, el uso de agua potable de Otay disminuyó un 18 por ciento entre junio de 2015 y octubre de 2016 superando las metas del estado.

La Autoridad de Agua del Condado de San Diego, que es el proveedor de agua de Otay, ha confirmado que tiene suministros de agua suficientes para cumplir con las demandas de las agencias que la conforman, incluso durante tres años de sequía. Para incrementar el suministro de agua de la región se construyó la Planta Desalinizadora de Carlsbad que comenzó a producir agua a principios de 2016.

Otay alienta a sus clientes a seguir haciendo su parte para ahorrar agua. Aunque la conservación del líquido vital es voluntaria en este momento, el desperdicio excesivo y la escorrentía están prohibidos todavía. Para ver una lista completa de las prácticas de ahorro de agua vigentes visite otaywater.gov/conservation.

Aunque no se espera ninguna meta de reducción de agua obligatoria hasta finales de este año natural, el Consejo Estatal va a reconsiderar las regulaciones de respuesta a la sequía de emergencia en enero de 2017. El Consejo Estatal indicó que evaluará los niveles de lluvia, nieve y conservación para poder determinar si es necesario hacer modificaciones a la regulación.

¡Gracias por apoyar la conservación de agua en el área de servicio de Otay y en la región de San Diego!

El Distrito de Agua de Otay Reconoce a los Ganadores del Concurso de Jardinería

El Distrito de Agua de Otay reconoció recientemente a los ganadores del Concurso de Jardines Amigables de California 2016 que ejemplificó mejor la belleza de los jardines de bajo consumo de agua en el distrito.

El comité de evaluación del concurso otorgó el premio de "Mejor Jardín del Distrito" a Bárbara y Nick Amalfitano de Bonita por su impresionante diseño y uso de plantas de bajo consumo de agua. Los participantes del concurso fueron evaluados por el atractivo del jardín en general, la selección de plantas, el diseño y los métodos de mantenimiento e irrigación utilizados.

En 2010, los Amalfitano también participaron en un programa local de reembolso para reemplazo del césped. Ellos cambiaron su césped de la parte frontal y trasera de su casa con un 50 por ciento de plantas de bajo consumo de agua. Sin la contratación de un paisajista profesional, quitaron la hierba

e integraron plantas tolerantes a la sequía. Su selección de plantas incluyó rosas banksiae, salvia, calandrinias, alfilerero, cactus, campanas verdes y disney.

El objetivo de los Amalfitano fue crear un paisaje que retuviera el agua evitando la escorrentía. Ellos mencionaron que esto dio lugar a una reducción del 78 por ciento en su consumo de agua en comparación con su uso más alto antes de reemplazar el césped. Durante el verano riegan el césped de la parte de atrás de su casa una o dos veces por semana utilizando su sistema de irrigación original. Sin embargo, durante el invierno, apagan el sistema de irrigación y riegan manualmente el jardín cuatro o cinco veces a la semana utilizando el agua almacenada en sus tres barriles especiales para agua de lluvia.

"Tenemos que utilizar agua para mantener vivo nuestro jardín, sin embargo, estamos utilizando la menor cantidad de agua posible

para que se vea muy bonito", mencionó Bárbara. Los diez ganadores de cada una de las agencias participantes obtuvieron premios relacionados con la conservación de agua incluyendo un cheque de \$250, un reconocimiento y fotografía laminada del ganador del concurso. Las fotografías de los jardines ganadores se pueden encontrar en la página oficial del concurso en www.landscapecontest.com/winners.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT CALL 619.670.2222 OR GO TO WWW.OTAYWATER.GOV