

Water Wise



Published for large landscape and irrigation customers of the Coachella Valley

Winter 2012

CVWD offers rebates to all customers

The district is now offering landscape rebate programs to all CVWD customers, even if valley cities do not match the funds. These conservation programs are designed to assist residents, large businesses and homeowner associations (HOAs) who want to reduce their outdoor water usage.

Under the programs, HOAs and commercial businesses may be eligible to receive a rebate for a full conversion or a minimal curbside conversion. Also available is the new generation sprinkler nozzle rebate program.

Program details are listed below.

• **Landscape conversions:**

For qualifying HOAs and commercial customers the district will pay \$1 for each square foot of grass replaced with desert-friendly landscaping up to 5,000 square feet. Rebates apply to both full conversions and curbside conversions.

• **New generation sprinkler nozzle replacement:** New generation sprinkler nozzles are more water-efficient than traditional spray nozzles. These sprinklers are easy to install and fit most standard pop-up sprinkler systems. This program is for those who wish to be more water-efficient but are not ready to convert their landscaping.

Rebates of \$2.50 per nozzle are available to large landscape customers



Ironwood Country Club, located in Palm Desert, recently converted one of its homeowner's associations from turf to desert-friendly landscaping. The country club also replaced all its sprinklers with water-saving new generation nozzles. Both projects were completed through CVWD's landscape rebate program.

who replace older, inefficient spray heads with water-saving new generation sprinkler nozzles and install weather-based irrigation controllers. The maximum rebate is \$500.

• **Smart controllers:** All qualifying rebate programs require that smart controllers be installed on all retrofitted landscapes including sprinkler replacement projects.

Large landscape customers may be eligible for smart controller rebates of up to \$750 per irrigated acre or 50 percent of the cost of the controller, whichever is less.

New this year, Rancho Mirage residents, HOAs or businesses who want to convert to desert-friendly landscaping can take advantage of a cooperative program between Coachella Valley Water District and the City.

Rancho Mirage HOA and businesses may be eligible for rebates of \$2 per square foot up to \$10,000 for a full landscape conversion.

Rebates for water-efficient, new generation sprinkler nozzles also are available. The rebate is a maximum of \$5 per nozzle.

The cost of all rebates is shared evenly between the City of Rancho Mirage and CVWD. All financial reimbursements will be made on a first-come, first-served basis.

Applications and eligibility requirements for all programs are available at www.cvwd.org or at CVWD offices located at 85995 Avenue 52 in Coachella, or 75525 Hovley Lane East in Palm Desert. Applications must be submitted in person or mailed to P.O. Box 1058, Coachella, CA 92236.

CVWD unveils redesigned website

The Coachella Valley Water District has redesigned its website to better serve its customers. The new website features a user-friendly design that highlights content that district customers most frequently seek out. By making these elements more visible and creating short-cuts to other pages, the process of finding information is simpler and faster.

The new conservation section is divided into three categories based on the type of water user: residential, large landscape (such as homeowner associations) and professional landscapers.

The section for large landscape customers has several new features.

◆ **Conservation Profiles:** This section features landscape conversion experiences of local country clubs, a memorial park and the exterior of a Palm Desert dental office.

◆ **Desert Transitions:** This is a 25-minute video created by the Desert Horticultural Society, Larry Crosby, Christine and Ken Hall, which features: Desert-friendly landscaping at Silver Sands Racquet Club, Deep Canyon Tennis Club and the Reserve Club.



In addition, local homeowners provide landscape conversion success stories.

There also is an overview of the native landscape utilized during construction of The University of California, Riverside's campus in Palm Desert.

◆ **Current rebates:** Conservation and landscape-conversion rebate programs are now organized by category, such as residential and professional. They are then divided by city or community. Prototype front lawns, with before-and-after photos, irrigation details and a plant palette are also available.

◆ **Ask Dave:** This section features copies of Water Wise's familiar question-and-answer column by Dave Koller.

◆ **Conservation Document Links:** These links provide access to the plant list from

CVWD's popular publication, *Lush and Efficient Landscape Gardening in the Coachella Valley*, and other resources that can be downloaded/printed.


◆ **Understanding ETo:** This area explains evapotranspiration and the crucial role it plays in the most efficient irrigation practices. Did you know that plants in some areas of the valley need 50 percent more water on certain days?

Other website features include a watering guide, upcoming landscape workshops and seminars, and contact information for requesting a CVWD employee to give a presentation to your association or community group.

The website is frequently updated with beneficial information and features for CVWD customers. Check it out today at www.cvwd.org

Irrigation Guide

This table shows the approximate amount of water different landscaping typically needs. Individual watering times vary based on sprinkler efficiency, soil and weather conditions. Gradually reduce the amount of water to find an adequate amount for your landscaping without being wasteful.

	Water-efficient shrubs	Water-efficient trees	Non-desert trees	Turf grass
January	.7 gal./day 2 days/week	14 gal./day 2 days/week	45 gal./day 2 days/week	Spray system: 4 min./day; 7 days/week Rotor system: 9 min./day; 7 days/week
February	.9 gal./day 3 days/week	21 gal./day 3 days/week	56 gal./day 3 days/week	Spray system: 6 min./day; 7 days/week Rotor system: 15 min./day; 7 days/week
March	.9 gal./day 4 days/week	16 gal./day 4 days/week	53 gal./day 4 days/week	Spray system: 9 min./day; 7 days/week Rotor system: 21 min./day; 7 days/week



A column to answer your landscaping and water conservation questions

Dave Koller is the conservation coordinator for the Coachella Valley Water District. He has a master's degree in horticulture, is a certified arborist and landscape irrigation auditor.



Q. Do you have any winter gardening tips for large landscapes?

A. Winter temperatures enable residents to spend considerable amounts of time outdoors. This season also is the perfect time to tackle some of the more challenging aspects of maintaining or starting a desert-friendly garden.

You may, for example, want to retrofit your sprinklers or irrigation systems.

For those who continue to maintain lawns, new-generation sprinkler nozzles are available that more efficiently deliver water where you want it to go while reducing unwanted runoff, saving both water and money. These rotary heads are easy to install and fit most pop-up sprinkler systems.

For other plants, including trees and shrubs, this is the right time to install a drip system. In many cases, existing sprinkler heads in flower beds and elsewhere can be replaced by drip irrigation heads, which apply water directly to the soil around the plant

instead of spraying it where it isn't needed. This results in healthier plants and reduced water use.

Another way to save water and time is to install a smart controller that automatically adjusts irrigation times, based either on historical data or actual weather conditions. These controllers help reduce water use for all types of vegetation and once programed, are virtually maintenance-free.

If there are any drainage problems in your yard, winter is a good time to build a drainage swale and retention basin, or a simulated creek bed with rocks and boulders, which serves the same purpose. Remember, stagnant water attracts mosquitoes, so make sure any excess water can drain through the soil readily.

Now also is the time to step back and look at your existing plant palette. Do you have the appearance you desire? If you have old landscaping with woody hedges and overgrown plants, consider giving it a face lift. Remove tired plants and create a new look with colorful water-efficient, low maintenance plants.

There are several local nurseries/gardening centers that can help you create a desired look for your landscape.

This, too, is a good time to think about removing all or some turf, for example, grass that borders sidewalks, driveways or the street. Creating a "buffer zone" of desert-friendly plants and other landscaping materials such as cobblestones or decomposed granite between your grass and concrete areas helps avoid overspray and enhances the appearance of your property.

Remember that removing Bermuda grass in the winter is more difficult because it is dormant. It is best to wait until late spring when the grass is actively growing, to kill it with an appropriate herbicide. This will make removal with a rototiller or sod cutter less difficult.

Coachella Valley Water District partners with several local governments to offer incentive programs for the new-generation sprinklers, smart controllers and turf removal. Homeowners are encouraged to check with CVWD or the city where they live to see what currently is available.

Additional information on these programs, and many more gardening tips, are available at www.cvwd.org





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News droplet

New topics to be discussed at landscape seminar

CVWD is hosting two Water Management Seminars for Landscape Professionals on Jan. 18 in English and Jan. 25 in Spanish. Seminars will be held at CVWD's new administration building in Palm Desert.

CVWD's water management specialists have revised the curriculum with new topics including practical soils, leak detection and meter logs, meeting your water budget and a simple distribution uniformity demonstration.

Each individual who completes the seminar will receive class materials and a certificate of completion. Attendees who meet specific criteria will be listed on the district's website.



Water Management

Seminar for Landscape Professionals

Designed to help local landscape professionals learn to efficiently irrigate their clients' lawns in this arid, hot climate.

Jan. 18 in English & Jan. 25 in Spanish
8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

To be held at CVWD's new Administration office
 (75515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert)

Registration cost is **\$25** per person

To register visit www.cvwd.org

