

# Water Conservation Tip



## Landscape Design

Select plants that do well in our climate and soil. Contra Costa has hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters, and many of us have heavy clay soil. Although nurseries offer a wide variety of plants, you'll have the greatest long-term success by choosing plants that thrive in our local conditions. Since the majority of residential water use is in our yards, you can improve your water use efficiency by choosing plants that require less water. For a recommended list of plants visit our website at [www.ccwater.com/consERVE](http://www.ccwater.com/consERVE) and click on the link for landscape tips. You can also pick up a free Water-Wise Gardening CD-ROM at the District Conservation Office.



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Group plants with similar water needs together to get the most out of your watering. This "hydro-zoning" will ensure plants are not over-watered or under-watered.

Avoid planting lawn in areas that are hard to water, such as steep slopes and narrow strips along sidewalks and driveways. If the only time you walk on your lawn is when you mow it, it may be time to consider replacing it with a water efficient garden.



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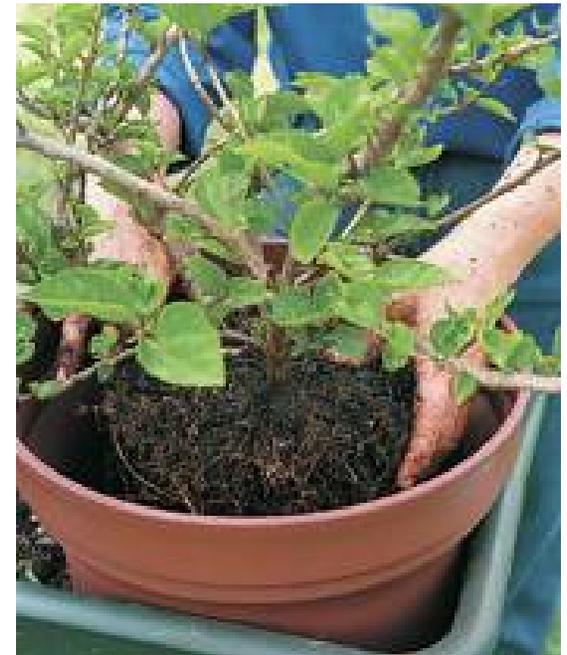
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When choosing plants at the nursery, make sure the plants have healthy root systems. When you pull the root-ball out of the container, the soil mix should stay in contact with the roots. Never buy a container-grown tree or shrub with tightly congested roots or one with thick roots poking through the drainage holes.



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Apply a 2 to 3-inch layer of mulch to your landscape. This will reduce water evaporation by up to 70 percent, especially during the hot summer months. Mulch will also reduce weeds and keep the plants roots cool in the summer. As an added bonus, mulch will slowly decompose over the year adding nutrients to the soil.

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Sprinklers should be installed so that each head sprays the full distance to the next head. This is called head-to-head coverage. If your system is not installed with head-to-head coverage, the water is probably not being applied very evenly. This will result in stressed lawn/plants and over watering to compensate.

A relatively new sprinkle nozzle called the MP Rotator Nozzle is now available that can improve this situation. This nozzle sprays farther and more uniformly. It can be purchased and installed on your existing pop-up sprinkler head. Also, if your system has low pressure, these nozzles can help. Visit a local irrigation supplier for information on these nozzles.