

# Landscaping During the Drought \*



## Can I replace my lawn with artificial turf, bark, pavement, or gravel?

Paving or concrete is limited to 40% of the front yard. If you are considering replacing your lawn, use drought-tolerant plants, artificial turf, bark, gravel, or other similar materials that are low maintenance and water efficient.

Artificial turf:

- Requires light watering from time to time.
- Replaces vegetation and damages healthy soil in your front yard that naturally absorbs runoff and distributes the water.
- Can warm up to very high temperatures in summer, which can heat up the house and be unsafe to play on.

Live plants are habitats for bees and small animals, cool houses and can clean the air and sequester carbon. Multi-family, commercial and industrial properties may replace lawn with drought-tolerant plantings. Renovation of landscaping must comply with the County Water Conservation Ordinance and review by County staff. Contact Michael Wall at [walm@sacounty.net](mailto:walm@sacounty.net) for information.

## Will I be cited for a brown or patchy lawn?

No. However, it is necessary to make sure the lawn is not overgrown. Lawns must remain mowed regardless of health of the lawn.

Overgrown lawns, whether live or dead, are violations of the County's Nuisance Code.



## How do I change my lawn to drought\*-tolerant landscaping?

Visit these links for resources and ideas:

- UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden - Drought Resources: <http://publicgarden.ucdavis.edu/public-garden/drought-resources>
- California Native Plant Society: [http://www.cnps.org/cnps/grownative/tips/lawn\\_alternatives.php](http://www.cnps.org/cnps/grownative/tips/lawn_alternatives.php)
- River Friendly Landscaping Guidelines: <http://www.ecolandscape.org/riverfriendly/resources.html>

\* in Unincorporated County

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## Can I turn off my sprinkler system?

Yes. Please consult with your water district about conservation requirements. It is recommended that tree, shrub, and groundcover areas be maintained and irrigated within the limits of water provider requirements. Trees and shrubs require significant maintenance and investment to establish, and are not as easily replaced as lawn. For multi-family, commercial and industrial properties, trees and shrubs in required landscape areas must be maintained and irrigated or hand watered within the limits of their respective water district requirements.



## What can I do to manage my landscaping during a drought?

In general, reduce the amount of water applied to landscapes and prioritize the maintenance of trees and shrub areas.

- Run irrigation using an automatic controller (or timer), or hand water. Consider a self-adjusting “smart” controller that reads weather conditions.
- Irrigate in multiple, short cycles to allow water to soak in and avoid run-off.
- Mulch shrub and flower beds heavily to slow the evaporation of water from the soil.
- Repair leaks and “tune” your irrigation to avoid overwatering or spraying onto sidewalks, etc.

Visit the California Landscape Contractors Association for more tips:

<http://www.clca.org/clca/about/consumer/drought/>

## Are individual graywater systems allowed?

Yes. The County has adopted the 2013 California Plumbing Code that does allow for graywater systems. Plans and a plumbing permit are required.

## How do I determine who my water provider is?

Find your water provider at <http://bewatersmart.info/find-your-water-provider/> or call 1-888-WTR-TIPS.

Landscaping requirements in the Sacramento County Zoning Code and Water Conservation Ordinance can be found at: <http://www.per.sacounty.net>.

For more water information, visit  
[www.sacounty.net/waterconservation](http://www.sacounty.net/waterconservation)

