

the dirt



FALL 2023 GARDENING NEWSLETTER

Go for the dream.

Plant now for the spring landscape you've always wanted.

With the days getting shorter and summer heat in decline, fall is the best time to start planting that luscious landscape you've been dreaming of. Beauty runs deep in a vibrant landscape, beginning underground. Shrubs and trees planted now will grow healthy root systems in winter that lead to vibrancy in spring.

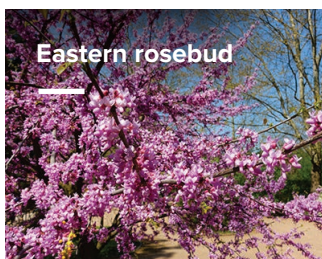
English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) provides a stunning accent as a compact shrub, bursting with purple flower clusters that give off a spicy perfume.

The **rockrose** (*Cistus purpureus*) is another a garden star: a fast-growing evergreen with dense green foliage, delicate, papery flowers and aromatic leaves.

Some popular and easy-to-find showstopper trees include the deciduous **Eastern redbud** (*Ceercis canadensis*) that produces a spectacle of pink blossoms in spring. Its irregular branching patterns add grace to a garden, and its heart-shaped leaves provide a kaleidoscope of color, going from red in spring to dark green in summer and yellow in fall.



The **strawberry tree** (*Arbutus marina*) is another favorite, with low-branching limbs of peeling red bark. Its dense foliage makes it suitable as an evergreen shade tree or dramatic landscape accent. From mid-fall to late winter, it produces showy clusters of bell-shaped flowers that transform to strawberry-looking berries in spring.



For more ideas, go to [IRWD.com/landscape](https://www.irwd.com/landscape) and browse our guided plant search and gallery.

Mulch matters.

Darren Ross



Darren Ross | Tierra Verde Industries

Tierra Verde is a family-owned business rooted since the 1990s in organics recycling. Darren Ross began working for the company 20 years ago, starting in an entry-level job in his teens and making his way up the ranks to his current position as general manager.

How has organics recycling evolved over the years?

Ross: Tierra Verde was involved in the early stages of diverting green waste from landfills and recycling it. Over time, we've evolved into the materials manufacturing side of the industry, producing over 20 different landscape materials including soils, compost and mulch.



Tell us about the Mulch Madness program you partner on with IRWD?

Ross: IRWD customers can sign up for the program and get half off the cost of bulk mulch purchased at our Irvine facility.

Mulch is a protective ground covering that saves water. It reduces evaporation, controls weeds and, in the case of higher quality mulches, enriches the soil — which also helps with moisture retention so you don't have to water as much.

You mentioned different qualities of mulch. What's the difference?

Ross: All mulch is going to provide many of the same benefits as a groundcover. But with a properly produced mulch, you know that it won't bring new problems to your landscape. All of our products go through a certain level of processing. We track temperature and moisture along with controlling the input materials to eliminate any potential for pests, weed seeds, pathogens and plant diseases.

The Mulch Madness program is offered only on bulk purchases. What if someone drives a car?

Ross: A lot of our customers will borrow a friend's pickup, rent a truck or trailer, or send in their gardener or landscaper to pick up a load.

Sign up and save! Visit [IRWD.com/mulchmadness](https://www.irwd.com/mulchmadness) to learn more about the program. For information on Tierra Verde Industries, go to [tierraverdeind.com](https://www.tierraverdeind.com).

Heart-leaved penstemon,
Keckiella cordifolia

Landscape going to the dogs?

Say goodbye to yellowing with these groundcovers.

When you weigh the balance between a happy dog and attractive lawn, the dog always wins. Backyards are ideal spaces for pets to romp, explore and do their business. But urine contains a high concentration of nitrogen that burns grass, leaving ugly yellow patches behind.



IRWD canine fan, Benny, is loving life in a patch of Kurapia.

Why not consider an alternate groundcover that will tolerate tinkling, add beauty to your landscape and save water to boot?

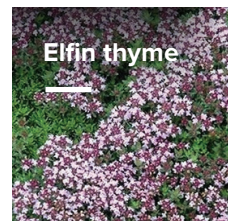
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is an excellent groundcover of fine, fern-like foliage ideal for our region. Left alone, it can grow to 3 feet in height to produce beautiful blooms, but it can also be mowed to resemble a lawn—a few times a year will keep it tidy.



Silver carpet (*Dymondia margaretae*) creates a dense mat of low-lying foliage with delicate yellow blooms in late spring and summer. Its striped leaves create a silvery sheen for a soft, glowing effect, with no mowing required.



Elfin thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*, "Elfin") blooms profusely in summer with clusters of tiny, lavender-pink flowers that attract butterflies. This is a hardy alternative to turf, growing just 2 inches in height. To maintain, shear to half an inch in early spring.



Kurapia (left) is nontoxic to pets, very hardy and drought tolerant. Once planted, it requires little care and will grow into a lush, flowering groundcover. It can also be mowed to create a dense covering, particularly in full sun.

Visit IRWD.com/landscape and click on the guided plant search under "Beautiful Gardens" for other suggestions.



Juan's tip of the season.

Time to water less.

Summer's over, and it's time to make some sprinkler adjustments. First, reduce your watering by about 30%. It may still be hot outside but daylight is waning, and plants are slowing down so they use less water. If needed, turn on your sprinkler manually for a few minutes to give them a quick dousing—and remember to shut it off when done. While the system is running, walk around your landscape and note any repairs that may be needed. Fix them soon to prevent water waste.



Looking ahead.

Your garden to-do list.

- **Smart pruning:** Summer heat leaves plants looking stressed and needing a little care. Light pruning may be needed. Remove dead leaves, branches and flowers. Use sharp and clean tools.
- **Ocean-friendly tips:** Adding mulch helps reduce weeds, retain soil moisture and increase soil life to have a well-balanced soil profile. Fix irrigation issues and spot water by hand. Water only what needs it.
- **Plant:** This is planting season. Select one-gallon pots as they will develop a deep and vast root system allowing them to grow stronger in the spring. Go to IRWD.com/plantlist to search for ideas.

Professional sprinkler repairs? We'll pay half!

Keeping your sprinkler system in tip-top shape can be challenging, but it saves water. Our Sprinkler Repair Program provides expert help and covers 50% of your repair costs. Visit IRWD.com/sprinklerrepair for more information.



Tap our online resources.

Visit IRWD.com/rebates for rebates to help offset the cost of turf removal, weather-based irrigation controllers, efficient sprinkler heads, drip kits and more. Plus, check out our plant database at IRWD.com/plantlist.

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