

# the dirt



WINTER 2021 GARDENING NEWSLETTER

## Let this sink in: Rain!

### Incorporate a permeable garden feature like a bioswale.



Ever notice how perky and vibrant garden plants look after the first good rain of the season? When it comes to watering, nature does it best.

Make the most of the rainfall with a garden design that captures water so it can percolate into the soil. It's good for the garden, the aquifer, and it reduces the need for supplemental irrigation. Sustainable watershed-wise landscaping provides these important benefits:

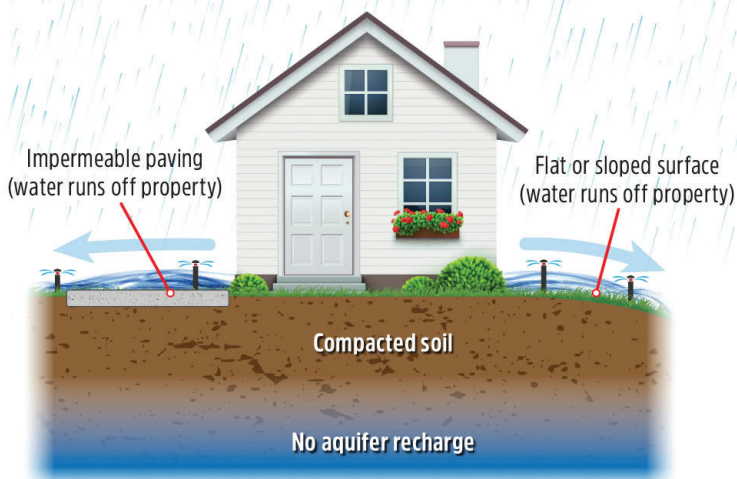
1. Promotes healthy, living, sponge-like soil.
2. Supports climate-appropriate plants, which require less supplemental irrigation.
3. Reduces stormwater runoff, which can pollute waterways, wetlands and the ocean.

Bioswales (contoured depressions dug within the landscape) are popular in watershed-wise landscaping. Permeable paving also lets rain percolate through your hardscape. Apply mulch and compost to enrich your soil and retain moisture.

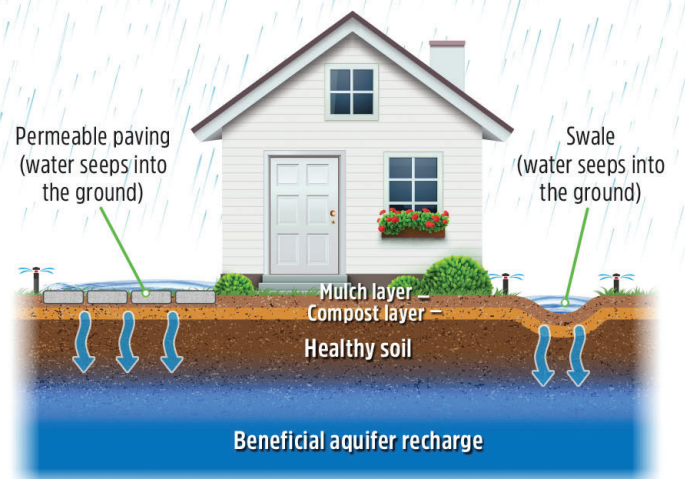
A stormwater retention feature, such as a bioswale, is a key component in IRWD's turf rebate program, which can help pay for your efficient new yard. Visit [bit.ly/waterwise-turf](https://bit.ly/waterwise-turf) to learn about rebates and watch videos about sustainable landscaping.

Also visit [RightScapeResources.com](https://RightScapeResources.com) for fact sheets about sustainability, permeable surfaces, and runoff solutions.

### Conventional landscape



### Watershed-wise landscape



# Landscape makeover brings green to community.



**Robin Reese | HOA landscape renovation expert**

Robin Reese is “The Problem Solver” at Bemus Landscape—a title he takes to heart as he assists homeowners associations in making community landscapes more beautiful and water efficient. “I stopped counting how much turf I’ve taken out after one million square feet,” he says.



Before

Kurapia grows well over tree roots and in high-traffic areas.



After

**IRWD: You recently oversaw a turf removal project for the Bella Rosa HOA in Irvine. Can you describe the project?**

**Reese:** The landscape was mostly cool-season turf that had endured dated irrigation and heavy foot traffic for years. We replaced the parkway turf with kurapia and upgraded the irrigation system with water-efficient nozzles and Weathermatic controllers.

**IRWD: What prompted the HOA to take on this project?**

**Reese:** They were looking for something green without all the headaches of turf. The ongoing expense of trying to maintain uniform fescue required some new thinking.

**IRWD: How much water do you expect the project will save?**

**Reese:** We expect the kurapia to require 50% less water, plus an additional 10% in savings from water loss associated with the outdated irrigation system.

**IRWD: Were rebates available through this project, and how did that affect the overall cost of the project?**

**Reese:** Rebates covered all costs of the project. We try to design a budget that will produce a net-zero cost up front. That’s important because HOAs are not flush with cash, so the rebates and the projected ROI are the real selling points.

**IRWD: What advice do you have for HOAs that might want to redo their landscape?**

**Reese:** Don’t be shy about considering change. The rebate programs are easy to navigate, and moving away from underutilized turf grass offers a great cost savings long-term.

## Did you know..?

Almost all HOA property in the IRWD service area is irrigated with drought-proof recycled water.

### Need help?

For your HOA: Contact Water Efficiency Specialist Juan Garcia at [garciaj@IRWD.com](mailto:garciaj@IRWD.com).

For your home: Visit [RightScapeNow.com](http://RightScapeNow.com) for gardening tips and links to contractors and designers.

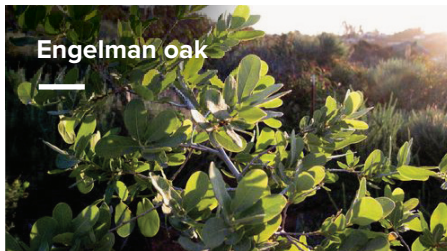
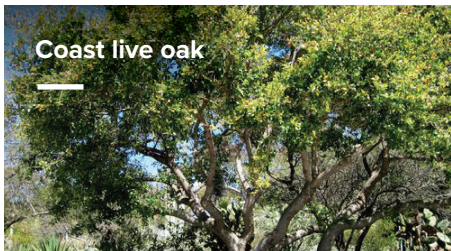


# California dreamin'.

Curling up with a good book is an excellent option for cool winter days, but if you think this is no time for gardening—you clearly have not met the California natives! Winter is the ideal time to plant them, taking advantage of the cooler temperatures and potential rainfall to let them get established before the weather gets warmer.

Plants native to California are adapted to our climate. They require less water, and they support important wildlife.

Over 6,000 types of native plants grow naturally throughout the state! That's a lot to choose from, but you can download a helpful planting guide for Orange County at [bit.ly/OC-plant-guide](https://bit.ly/OC-plant-guide) to see a recommended starter list. For additional options, visit [CalScape.org](https://CalScape.org) to find plants native to your location and nurseries that carry the plants you are looking for.



BEAUTY SECRET  
No. 37

**Take a lesson from the  
birds and the bees.**

Native California plants are not only colorful and interesting, they will attract a whole new set of friends. Know what's even more beautiful?

Incentives for turf removal are available up to \$10,000. Visit [RightScapeNow.com](https://RightScapeNow.com).





# Juan's tip of the season.

## Check your sprinkler system

Winter is the perfect time of year to consider sprucing up your sprinkler system, checking for issues, and adjusting your watering practices. There are various water-efficient irrigation products to consider such as weather-based irrigation controllers, water-efficient nozzles, and drip conversion kits that can help make your sprinkler system more effective.

When it comes to the performance of your sprinkler system, it is important to conduct monthly or weekly irrigation checks. Turn on your sprinklers and note issues like broken sprinkler bodies, leaking seals, missing nozzles, etc. and make repairs to prevent runoff and water waste.



## Learn at our webinars

**Jan. 13 | Noon | OC Master Gardeners Workshop – Be a Garden Scene Investigator.** Use your powers of observation and trusted internet resources to solve garden problems, identify plants and deal with pests. Learn the steps Master Gardeners take when answering questions on their hotline.

**Feb. 10 | Noon | Turf Be Gone.** Learn the steps to remove your lawn and replace it with a water-efficient garden.

Sign up at [RightScopeNow.com/events](https://RightScopeNow.com/events).

## Tap RightScope resources

Visit [RightScopeNow.com](https://RightScopeNow.com) 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 [RightScopeResources.com](https://RightScopeResources.com).

# Looking ahead.

## Winter garden to-do list

- **Prune deciduous trees:** It is a common practice to prune deciduous trees and plants during their dormancy period. This allows you to shape the tree and remove diseased, damaged or dead wood to promote a vigorous burst of new growth in the spring. Late winter would be the optimum time to prune.
- **Look for pests:** Winter is the best time to start investing in a California friendly landscape. Native plants provide natural protection against many pests, eliminating the need for pesticides.
- **Check watering schedules:** Be sure to make adjustments for the season. Turn off your sprinklers if it is rainy. If the season is dry, water only if necessary.

## About The Dirt

*The Dirt* is a quarterly gardening resource from Irvine Ranch Water District, created to help you grow a more beautiful, water-efficient garden. Each newsletter brings you seasonal tips to keep plants thriving all year long.

## Need to contact IRWD?

**Customer Service:** 949-453-5300

**Email:** [CustomerService@IRWD.com](mailto:CustomerService@IRWD.com)

**Website:** [IRWD.com](https://IRWD.com)

## Join the conversation on social media

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