

the dirt



FALL 2024 GARDENING NEWSLETTER

Showstoppers.

Hedges enhance the beauty and privacy of your backyard.

We live in close quarters with our neighbors. But even in the best of situations, when it comes to the tranquility of our backyards we could all use a little escape from the outside world.

If good fences make good neighbors, a lush layer of landscaping will bring both privacy and beauty to enhance the value and seclusion of your own sovereign space.

Hedges provide a glossy green barrier to probing eyes. They can screen the view of a neighbor's shed or trampoline, and form a living backdrop for time spent with family and friends.

Studies show that green spaces can also reduce stress, enhance mental well-being and improve cognitive function.



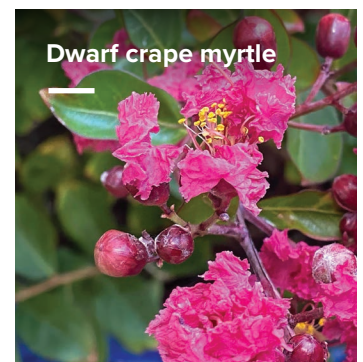
There are many plants you can use to make your yard your own. The privet hedge is fast-growing and dense, as is the Carolina cherry laurel. Both

produce aromatic blooms at various times of year.

Clusters of shrubs and small trees like lemonade berry or a dwarf crape myrtle can also serve as privacy plants, providing variety in depth, height, form and texture.

Explore your own plant pairings for seasonal color and interest. The deep green leaves and bright blue flowers of the California lilac blend well with a ribbon of orange echinacea blooms. Spiky groundcovers, like the green mound juniper, pair well with the soft and fuzzy leaves of a lamb's ear.

Go to [IRWD.com/landscape](https://www.irwd.com/landscape) for a guided plant search to help you on your way.



Secret's in the soil.

Healthy landscapes begin with a living loam.



Joanne
Crawford-Dunér

Joanne Crawford-Dunér | Master Gardener

Her love of gardening took root as a child in her parents' edible organic garden. Today, Joanne Crawford-Dunér draws from that passion and her training in landscape design and botany to cultivate a growing footprint of sustainable landscape enthusiasts — giving lectures, workshops and advice through University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Orange County.

You've said a healthy landscape begins with the soil.

Can you explain?

Crawford-Dunér: Many people blame unhealthy plants on bugs or underwatering, but the problem lies most often in the soil. A healthy soil needs minerals (dirt), water, air and organic matter — the byproducts of decaying plant materials and the living organisms that come with it — to provide all the healthy things plants need to grow. If any one of these components is lacking, your plants won't thrive.

How can someone check for these soil conditions?

Crawford-Dunér: Put some dirt in your hand and squeeze it to determine where it lies between the textures of pure clay and pure sand. You want a healthy mix of both. Luckily, most Orange County soil is in that middle range.



Like a sponge, healthy soil holds nutrients and moisture but drains well so air can reach plant roots.

What's the best way to increase soil health?

Crawford-Dunér: The simple process of adding wood chip mulch (not a fake, rubber mulch) will do it. The mulch will decompose and that decomposition will add the nutrients and organic matter your soil needs.

Learn more

Attend our **Master Gardeners Landscape Design workshop** on Saturday, Oct. 5, where Crawford-Dunér is a presenter. Sign up at [IRWD.com/events](https://www.irwd.com/events). You can also contact UCCE Master Gardeners of OC at mgorange.ucanr.edu.

Shed Show Road Show is back!

Visit us at your local Home Depot for landscape and rebate tips.

IRWD's video landscape series, The Shed Show, is making the rounds in your neighborhood, featuring landscape guru Juan Garcia and other water efficiency staff to provide free landscaping advice and help applying for rebates and other water-saving incentives.

If you are thinking about a smart controller for your irrigation system, just stop by one of our Shed Show Road Show Smart Irrigation Events and apply for a mail-in rebate that usually covers the purchase price — up to \$255!

- **East Irvine Home Depot:** 8 a.m. to noon, Oct. 12
6200 Irvine Blvd., Irvine
- **Costa Mesa Home Depot:** 8 a.m. to noon, Nov. 2
2300 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa

The Shed Show is a landscape video series designed to help customers upgrade their irrigation systems, redesign their landscapes, and learn more about water-friendly plants. Watch past episodes at IRWD.com/shedshow.



Redoing your lawn? Tips for removing your grass

If you've applied for IRWD's \$5 turf removal rebate (see back page for details on our extended offer) and received a Notice to Proceed, it's time to remove your lawn.

But how? The California Department of Water Resources recommends these methods:

- **Physical removal:** This is a labor-intensive approach that is eco-friendly, but results in debris that you may have to pay to properly dispose of.
- **Sheet mulching:** Install layers of overlapping cardboard and newspaper under at least 4 inches of mulch. This kills the grass, improves soil structure as it decomposes, and eliminates green waste.
- **Solarization:** Covering the lawn area with a black plastic sheet "cooks" the plants and seeds underneath, but it also eliminates helpful microorganisms in the soil.
- **Chemical removal:** There are other more environmentally friendly approaches to use, but if you use a weed killer, be sure to follow the directions on the package. Search for turf removal at water.ca.gov for more.



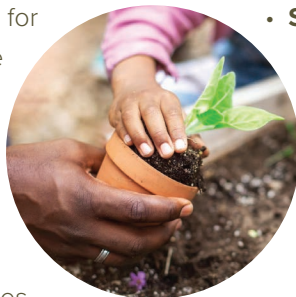
Juan's tip of the season.

It's planting season!

With the weather getting cooler, it's time to plan for planting. Warm soil and natural rainfall later in the season will promote vigorous root growth so your plants grow strong in the spring.

Start preparing your plant list now.

Need a little help? IRWD has all the resources you need at IRWD.com/landscape. Here, you can view garden galleries, fact sheets on landscape care and renovations, and of course an extensive database of water friendly plants.



Looking ahead.

Your garden to-do list.

- **Start pruning:** Clean up your landscape. Lightly prune your trees and shrubs, and remove dead leaves, branches and flowers. Use sharp and clean tools.
- **Attend our workshop:** Go to IRWD.com/events to register for our Master Gardeners Landscape Design workshop on Oct. 5 for everything you need to know to create your new landscape.
- **Start planting!** Plant small, using one-gallon plants, because they will develop a deep and vast root system that promotes healthy growth in spring.

Turf rebate extended!

We'll pay you to remove your lawn—but you'll have to act quickly for the best deal! IRWD has pushed back the deadline for its \$5 Turf Replacement Program rebate to Oct. 1, so you can get the paperwork started now and still plan for planting in late fall.

Go to IRWD.com/turfrebate today to lock in your savings!

#NoMoMow

WE CAN'T HELP YOU REMOVE THAT.

But we can help you remove your lawn.

GET \$5/SQ FT

Offer extended to Oct. 1!

Need to contact IRWD?

Customer Service: 949-453-5300

Email: CustomerService@IRWD.com

Website: IRWD.com

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