



California-Friendly Gardening Festival Showcases Water-Wise Plants, Landscape Designs and New Irrigation Exhibit

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(Mission Times Courier, San Diego, CA) As the hot summer season winds down, the San Diego fall planting season revs up. The 3rd Annual California-Friendly Gardening Festival, Saturday, October 27, from 9am-3pm, at the Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College, comes at just the right time to help San Diegans learn about water-wise landscapes suited for our semi-arid climate, and to find beautiful drought-tolerant plants that will bring their landscapes to life. The festival comes at the end of another historically dry year, and on the heels of the recent federal court ruling to restrict operations on pumps that supply water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and ultimately to three million San Diego County residents.

"Given the ongoing lack of rain, and the upcoming restrictions on water supplies from the Delta, drought-tolerant landscapes are an increasingly important water conservation measure," said Marty Eberhardt, executive director of the Garden. "The festival offers a marketplace for drought-tolerant plants from local nurseries, and education about California-Friendly landscapes in a family-friendly environment that promises activities and fun for everyone."

The beautiful plantings and displays at The Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College will be the backdrop for the festival. The event is free and open to the public, with free parking. The Water Conservation Garden is located at 12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon, CA.

This year's festival will include the unveiling of the Garden's new Irrigation Exhibit. This impressive new exhibit helps to clarify the enigma of irrigation design by giving an overview of five important irrigation design components: sprinkler selection and spacing, drip irrigation principles, system flow capacity, proper zoning of sprinkler valves and irrigation control options. The opening is scheduled for 10am during the festival.

Several varieties of low-water-use plants from local nurseries will be on sale, and visitors can get water-saving tips for their entire home by visiting the conservation booth hosted by San Diego water agencies. Children are invited to participate in the Great Pumpkin Walk, get their faces painted, and head over to the Garden's outdoor amphitheater with their favorite adult to enjoy live music. The Garden's docents will offer lovely container gardens, and the Gift Shop will be well-stocked with a full range of gardening books and supplies for the onset of fall gardening.

The "Ask the Experts" corner returns, featuring landscape designers and architects and a certified arborist offering free consultations to the

architects, and a certified arborist offering free consultations to the public. Participating designers include Kate Wiseman, Connie Beck, and Christiane Holmquist. Each designer offers a unique water-wise specialty, including native landscapes, and organic wildlife habitats. Bring photos and diagrams of your yards for feedback during their 20-minute free consultation. Reservations are highly recommended, call (619) 660-0614, ext 10.

Nan Sterman, gardening expert, writer, and host of the KPBS gardening show, *A Growing Passion*, will give a talk entitled "Garden Within Your Watering Means" at 1:30 pm in the Garden's classroom. Included are best gardening practices for our Mediterranean climate, followed by an introduction to the wide selection of Mediterranean climate plants including trees, bulbs, perennials, shrubs, herbs, and more - all one would need to create a beautiful and satisfying garden. She will also sign her new book, *California Gardener's Guide Volume 2*. Other experts will offer mini-lectures throughout day on a variety of topics including native plants and backyard composting.

Giveaways abound at this year's festival. The first 100 attendees will receive a free gardening DVD entitled, *California Friendly Gardening for San Diego Landscapes: Landscape Design Elements and Firewise Tips*, produced by the San Diego County Water Authority. Visitors can also enter an opportunity drawing for nursery gift certificates, free gardening classes, and a grand prize of a home landscape re-design by Chris Wotruba of Perennial Adventure.

Winners of the Garden's second annual scarecrow contest will be announced at the event. Scarecrow entries will be on display at the Water Conservation Garden for two weeks prior to the festival and the public is invited to vote. The contest is open to community groups and families, and individuals in these age ranges: 10 and under, 11-17, and Adult. Contest rules and info can be obtained at www.thegarden.org or call (619) 660-6841.

The Garden is open daily from 9 am to 4 pm. There is signage for self-guided tours. Evening and weekend tours, classes, and events are available to visitors. Call (619) 660-0614 for further information and visit the web site at www.thegarden.org