

Want to know more?

Learn about NatureScape workshops, designating your yard as a Certified Wildlife Habitat and more!

www.chulavistaca.gov/naturescape

(619) 409-3893

conservation@chulavistaca.gov

For information on sustainable, water-saving landscapes, incentives and rebates, online learning and videos, visit:

San Diego County Water Authority: www.watersmartsd.org

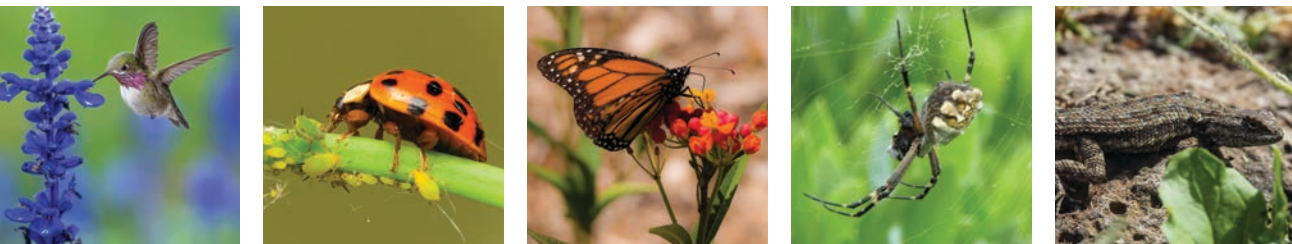
Water Conservation Garden: www.thegarden.org

or contact your water provider:

Sweetwater Authority: www.sweetwaterauthority.org

Otay Water District: www.otaywater.gov

California American Water: www.amwater.com/caaw



nature: scape



Office of Sustainability
chulavistaca.gov/clean

The City of Chula Vista is grateful
to our NatureScape Program
funding partner:



Create a NatureScape in your yard or garden to provide a beneficial habitat for bees, birds and other wildlife while conserving precious resources – especially water. A NatureScape provides food for insects, birds and other animals; furnishes a water source; and creates protection for animals to live and raise their young. Residents who create a NatureScape may be able to receive designation as a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.

5 Key Steps:

Create water-conserving, sustainable landscapes – it takes a bit more planning but you'll see significant savings in labor and water over time!



Fertile, nourished soil is the foundation for a vibrant yard and garden.

Build Healthy Living Soils 1

Healthy soil provides air, water and nutrients for plants, serves as nature's environmental protector and plays a part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions by removing carbon dioxide from the air. The best way to improve soil is by adding compost. Compost helps sandy soils hold nutrients and water and loosens clay soils. Compost is the dark, rich organic material produced by the controlled natural decomposition of organic materials such as leaves, grass clippings and fruit and vegetable scraps.

- Mix compost into your soil to improve its texture, increase nutrient level and water holding capacity.
- Top dress your planted areas. Properly applied compost serves as a natural fertilizer.
- Mulch is like a blanket for your soil. It is used as a groundcover on planted areas and bare soil to moderate soil temperature, reduce water evaporation, inhibit weed growth and prevent soil erosion. Typically, mulch consists of leaves, wood chips, grass clippings or compost.



Native plants are adapted to our dry environmental conditions.

Plant Right for Your Site 2

Get to know your yard. Determine the sunny or shady, dry or damp areas and small or large spaces. If you are redesigning your landscape or making simple changes, create a plan. Water-wise yards take more planning but over time offer significant savings in labor and water costs. Do your homework before finalizing plant choices.

- Select climate-appropriate, drought-tolerant native and/or California-friendly non-native plants native to Western and Mediterranean climate zones. These have adapted over thousands of years and animal species depend on them for food and habitat.
- Refer to the Nifty 50 Plants Guide for Water Smart Landscapes from the San Diego County Water Authority. The Nifty 50 consists of shrubs, succulents, vines, groundcovers, flowers, trees and grasses which thrive in our semi-arid climate.
- Group plants by their needs. Put plants that need full sun, or shade or regular irrigation together with those of similar needs.



Rain barrels collect water, which can be stored and used on plants when it's dry.

WaterSmart Irrigation 3

Make every drop count – be WaterSmart! Outdoor water use for watering landscapes can comprise over 60 percent of total home water use. Use efficient irrigation technologies and capture rainwater for future use to grow healthier plants. Avoid overwatering – irrigate long enough to wet the entire root zone and don't apply water faster than the soil can absorb it. Irrigate long enough to wet the entire root zone and don't apply water faster than the soil can absorb it. Adjust watering schedules with weather and seasons and water before sunrise or after sunset.

- Use an automatic irrigation system with timers for each zone of your landscape.
- Switch to rotating sprinkler heads that use 20% less water by distributing a stream of water instead of traditional heads.
- Use drip irrigation systems to directly water each plant.
- When hand-watering, use a nozzle with a shutoff valve to efficiently pinpoint individual plants.
- Collect rainwater in rain barrels for later use. Harvesting rainwater can reduce water bills and the community's reliance on imported water from outside our region.
- Consider a single-source Laundry-to-Landscape graywater system connected to clothes washer for irrigation of trees, shrubs and other plants.

Don't water if it has recently rained. Check frequently for leaks and proper operation of all irrigation system components including alignment of drip and sprinkler heads. Ideally, remove or reduce lawn areas and replace grass with groundcovers and other plants to create a NatureScape to attract wildlife.



Avoid the use of chemical pesticides that can kill "good" bugs.

Toxic-free Pest Control 4

Think twice before using pesticides (insect killers) and herbicides (weed killers). Natural yard care practices can avoid the need for using toxic products. Rich soil breeds wholesome plants and using compost will eliminate poor soil conditions and nutrient deficiencies. These products can be harmful to people, pets and the environment by impacting plant well-being and damaging soil.

- Start with prevention – build healthy soil with compost and mulch. Soil organisms protect plants from many disease and insect pest problems.
- Mulching controls weeds. Pull weeds before they seed and spread.
- Most bugs are "good bugs" and only a small percentage are pests. Good bugs help control unwanted pests.
- Don't spray a plant with toxic chemicals at the first sign of damage – plants often outgrow damage.
- Select plants that attract beneficial good bugs. Pest-repelling plants include borage, dill, garlic, onion, fennel, sage, thyme, parsley, mint, nasturtium and marigolds.
- Try natural alternative make-your-own sprays to repel and kill unwanted pests. These include plant-based insecticides mixtures with onion, garlic, basil, lemons and cayenne pepper.



Spend less time on the lawn and more time doing the things you enjoy.

Natural Lawn Care: Grasscycling 5

Lawns can be the most time-consuming part of landscape maintenance and water needs are often highest for grass areas. Consider removing or minimizing lawn areas and provide more area for water-smart landscaping alternatives with climate-appropriate plants, native grasses and groundcovers that make for a vibrant NatureScape. Maintaining a hardy lawn naturally requires providing proper nutrients and the right amount of water. Every single lawn can benefit from two easy-to-apply nutrient sources - grasscycling and compost.

- Grasscycling is a quick and easy way to recycle grass clippings and fertilize your lawn at the same time. By leaving the nitrogen-rich grass clippings on the lawn they quickly decompose and the soil organisms recycle them into free fertilizer.
- Aerate one or two times a year to increase water penetration to the grass roots. After aerating, top dress lawns with compost instead of chemical fertilizers.
- Pull weeds by hand instead of using chemical "weed and feed" products.
- Use an irrigation controller connected to low-flow, efficient sprinklers that cover adjacent grass areas and ensure even watering without over-spraying to avoid runoff.

