

TOP 5 TIPS!

For Water-Smart Spring Gardening

UCCE Master Gardeners of Orange County

April showers may bring May flowers in some parts of the country, but in Southern California, it usually means the end of the rainy season.

Despite recent rains, the reality is that we live in a semi-arid area. Dry conditions are not unusual, and drought is always on the horizon.

To live and thrive here, we must all do our part to be water-smart!

Follow these simple tips to keep your landscape looking great while keeping your outdoor water use in check:



1

ADD MULCH TO THE GROUND UNDER YOUR PLANTS.

A three to four-inch layer of organic mulch under your shrubs and trees not only reduces evaporation of moisture from the soil, it produces healthier roots and cuts down on weeds.

2

MONITOR YOUR IRRIGATION SYSTEM.

Most homeowners have their sprinklers set to go off early in the morning while sleeping. Find out how to turn your sprinklers on manually and observe their spray once a month. You may discover broken risers, malfunctioning sprinkler heads, or water spraying the street and sidewalk. Problems like these can be easily fixed to eliminate water waste.

3

ADJUST THE TIMER ON YOUR IRRIGATION SYSTEM.

Learn how to turn it off during periods of rain, and when you turn it back on, try reducing the amount of time it runs. If water runs off your lawn and down the gutter, you should water for a shorter interval.

4

CHOOSE NEW PLANTS WITH THEIR WATER NEEDS IN MIND.

If you're doing a spring "spruce up," look at the plant tags on your potential purchases to see how water-thirsty they are. Many attractive flowering plants look good with minimal water. Explore beautiful, sustainable, drought-tolerant selections at <https://www.ocwatersmartgardens.com/>

5

REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF TURF IN YOUR LANDSCAPE.

Turf is great if you need a play area for your children or pets, but if your lawn is just a green carpet that gets no use, think about putting in some low water use groundcover or shrubs. You can be rewarded not only with a rebate, but also with a habitat for beautiful birds and butterflies. For rebate information, visit: <https://mwdoc.com/turf>.