

Garden Wise TV Episode 14: Landscape Triage: What to Save in a Drought (29:06)



Despite the rain we've been experiencing, Santa Barbara County remains among the small percent of California experiencing moderate drought. Because of our semi-arid climate, conservation will always play a significant role in managing our water supply. That's why it's important to know how to use the water we do have efficiently. In this episode, learn how to design a stunning water wise garden, how to

properly apply compost and mulch, and how to inspect your landscape to determine which plants to water the most.

To start, Cathie Pare, Water Resource Specialist with the City of Santa Barbara, shows us how to determine which plants in our landscape need water the most. Cathie recommends starting off by evaluating what is already present in your property's landscape. The property in this episode has many water saving features in place including: a nice layer of mulch, shade provided by a tree, drip line, and the use of native plants. Cathie demonstrates how to determine where there are opportunities to save water. Lawn is a heavy water user and Cathie suggests replacing old sprinkler heads that emit 1.5-2 gallons of water per minute with ones that spray $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon per minute in order to water more efficiently and save water. Cathie also shows us how to determine the amount of water other plants in your landscape need. An easy method is to use a household water probe to see the current moisture level of your lawn or landscape to ensure you are only watering when the soil is dry.



Next, Daniel Wilson, of Wilson Environmental Contracting, takes us through a recent renovation at the Stevenson Property where a traditional landscape filled with lawn and ivy was transformed it into a haven for wildlife and peace. The landscape was redesigned to utilize a rainwater harvesting design in order to maximize the infiltration of any

rain into the landscape and benefit the over 40 native plants that were used to create the landscape. The use of rain water harvesting techniques such as rain tanks and effectively redirecting rainwater was incorporated throughout the garden.

Wrapping the episode, Oscar Carmona, Santa Barbara County Green Gardener Program Instructor, walks us through the benefits and proper application of compost and mulch to a garden. He suggests applying the compost first, followed by 3 – 6 inches of mulch, while giving a couple of inches of space around the base of the plant to help prevent moisture build up.



The mulch and compost combination has the benefit of providing nutrition for the plants, moderates water, keeps soils open, suppresses weeds, and can help keep mud down during rain. Santa Barbara County offers free mulch to the public at the South Coast Recycling and transfer station by either picking it up yourself or paying a small delivery fee.

In the wise words of our Host, Adrian Brannan, “remember you are the agent of change, and together we can conserve water and create beautiful climate appropriate gardens.” Now, you have the tools to create a healthy, water wise garden. Learn more about designing water wise landscapes by visiting our website WaterWiseSB.org.

