

## Garden Wise TV Episode 16: Spring Gardening, Pest Control and Hollywood Natives (31.51)

Santa Barbara County is in its seventh year of drought, which is why water conservation is more important than ever. Since landscapes are one of the highest water users, it is important to identify where to save. In this episode, learn how to properly maintain your water wise garden, learn to combat pests organically, and how to choose the right plants for the right place.



To start, Rachel Wright, Water Conservation Compliance Specialist with the Goleta Water District, shares tips for conserving water when maintaining your landscape. Rachel recommends maintaining a healthy layer of mulch. The layer should be 3-6 inches thick and should be a few inches from the base of the plant. Adding mulch to your landscape is important because it helps retain moisture, reduces weed growth, and adds nutrients to the soil. Weed removal is also

recommended because weeds compete with other plants in your landscape for nutrients. When removing weeds, it's vital that the root is removed to prevent regrowth. When maintaining your landscape, it is also important to keep an eye out for pests in addition to rotting and decay on plants. Pests can be removed by wiping the plant with or without water. If this method does not work, an organic pest solution can be used as an alternative. Chemical pesticides should be used as a last resort. Finally, Rachel points out the importance of maintaining your irrigation, checking for leaks, and adjusting poorly placed sprinklers. The angle of sprinkler heads should be checked to ensure they are hitting the intended location, while drip lines should be inspected for breaks or emitters that have popped off. Numerous emitters popping off the line may mean the pressure is too high and a pressure reducer needs to be installed. Understanding your irrigation controller is vital in maintaining a healthy landscape, by visiting [WaterWiseSB.org/Calculator](https://WaterWiseSB.org/Calculator) you can calculate your landscapes watering needs.

In the next segment, Oscar Carmona, owner of Healing Grounds Nursery and teacher of the Green Gardener Program, explains how to use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to protect your plants from pests. IPM has 5 fields of control: education, cultural controls, physical controls, biological controls, and pesticides. The premise of IPM is that a healthy plant will be less susceptible to disease and health problems, therefore the educational field of IPM suggests using resources such as [WaterWiseSB.org](https://WaterWiseSB.org) to ensure your plants are getting what they need to combat these issues. Cultural controls is all about management and execution of the information learned from the first field. Matt Buckmaster, Owner of Island Seed and Feed provides information of the last field of IPM, pesticides, specifically on organic, all natural, pesticides. In addition to pesticides, Matt shares alternatives such as biological controls, including lady bugs which eat aphids and other bugs, and physical controls, like copper tape and gopher baskets to act as a barriers. Ultimately, IPM is a



progression from the most benign act of educating yourself about your plants needs to chemical pesticides which should only be used as a last resort.



In the third segment, Billy Goodnick, local landscape architect, shows his clients how to choose the right plants for each space in their landscape. These Santa Barbara homeowners used [WaterWiseGardeningSB.org](http://WaterWiseGardeningSB.org), to select plants for their new landscape. With help from Billy, they selected plants that would not only look good throughout their yard, but also do well. To save time and money, Billy suggest separating and growing plants that are doing well. In addition, the

way plants grow and flower is an important factor when planning your landscape; for example Bougainvillea does poorly when confined to a small space because flowers form at new growth tips which are often cut away to prevent it overtaking other plants. In summary, Billy suggests thinking about what the role of the plant in your landscape will be, what size plant will achieve that role, will it be able to grow in your landscape, and how you want it to look.

In this segment of “What Tree is That”, Jeff Nighman from Santa Barbara Natives Nursery, tells us about his favorite tree, Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*). Toyon is a drought-tolerant plant that is also an excellent choice for screening purposes. Jeff likes Toyon for its ability to grow anywhere, from riparian areas to hillsides to underneath eucalyptus trees. However, they do not like moisture and therefore should not be placed where they will get sprayed by irrigation. Toyon needs little to no maintenance and will grow into a medium sized tree. The fruit on Toyon stays through winter and attracts wildlife to feed on the berries.



In the wise words of our Host, Becky Davis, “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 [WaterWiseSB.org](http://WaterWiseSB.org).

