

Garden Wise TV Episode 10: Sage Advice from Garden Masters (36:25)

Since we live in a semi-arid climate, knowing how to create and maintain a water wise landscape is extremely valuable. In this episode, we look at a program in Santa Barbara County teaching residents just that and helping them become masters at saving water.

The Master Gardener Program teaches students everything from the basics of what a plant needs to grow, to how to best save water in your garden. The University of California started the Santa Barbara County chapter in 1990. Since then, an average of 25-50 residents have enrolled each year, creating a



community of master gardeners. The program lasts from February to June and is a blend of workshops, in-class hours, hands-on experience, volunteering in the community, and homework. You gain a range of knowledge in topics such as succulent gardens, water conservation, and composting. After 12 weeks of training students become certified master gardeners and commit to putting in volunteer hours and continuing their

education. This program provides a resource to solve problems in your garden and gives you a chance to help others in your community.

Next up we learn about rain sensors, a simple shut-off device that prevents an automatic sprinkler timer from turning on during and after a rain storm. Cathie Pare, a City of Santa Barbara Water Resources Specialist, shows us how to install a rain sensor. It is composed of a stack of wafers that swell up when it starts raining and pushes on a switch to turn off your sprinkler timer. Before you install it on your roof, test it by turning on your controller to see the water come on. Push the button down to see the water turn off and then let go for it to turn back on. The rain sensor has 2 wires that are safe to use and the order of the color does not matter. Open the controller box face, look for jumper wire underneath and it will say "SEN" or "RSS", and place both rain sensor wires in here. Once the wires are attached you can install it on the roof face up and away from trees. For more information on rain sensors visit SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WaterWise.



Deana McMillion, Master Gardener, gives us a tour of her garden to learn about succulents and how to get more for free. Why grow succulents? They are easy, beautiful, and create a sculptural landscape. The first step in creating a succulent garden is to determine your goal. Deanna's was to get rid of her lawn and not use irrigation. Next, determine the placement of your plants in the landscape. Once your garden



is established you can propagate, or get free plants! Clip a little piece of your succulent about one inch above the soil line. Then, clip off the stem, put the rosettes right in the soil, and in no time it will start sprouting plantlets. Succulents prefer fast draining soil; a good mix of organic mixture and pumice or gravel to create air in the soil. To learn more about propagating succulents, call the Master Gardeners Helpline at 893-3485.