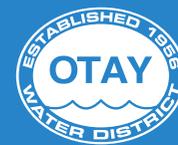


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FALL 2015

A NEWSLETTER FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT



## Making El Niño Work for You This Fall

**EL NIÑO'S IMPACT**  
Fall/Winter Scenario



Thinking about removing that thirsty turf and replacing it with more water-wise planting choices? Well, fall is the time for planting, and you can make this fall's projected El Niño work for you.

An El Niño is an unusual warming of ocean temperatures in the equatorial region of the Pacific Ocean that increases the likelihood of intense rainfall across the southern part of the United States. A particularly strong El Niño is projected for this fall and winter, and that could bring large quantities of rainfall to southern California and reduce the amount of watering that you'll need to help your drought tolerant plants establish their roots and thrive. There are a few things to keep in mind this particular fall to help you save water and money.

More rain means that you can cut back on your watering schedule. If rain is in the forecast, turn off your irrigation system and leave it off for at least 48 hours.

If it's overcast, soil will retain its moisture longer, absorb less water, and that could lead to more runoff the next time you irrigate. Always remember to watch for runoff and adjust your watering schedule accordingly (at least once a month, year round). If you see runoff after only a few minutes of irrigation, shorten your watering times or use multiple start times to spread out your watering. If you are not sure how much to water your grass, roses, or drought tolerant plants, use the Landscape Water Use Calculator at [www.otaywater.gov](http://www.otaywater.gov).

Fall is also a good time to check or replace the battery in your irrigation controller. Batteries save your programmed schedule in the event of a power outage. When controllers lose their scheduled programs, they default to watering ten minutes daily, every day, until reprogrammed.

This can lead to overwatering, runoff, and high water bills any time of year.

Even if it doesn't rain, cooler fall temperatures means that plants, trees, and shrubs require less water because less of it evaporates. After November 1st, cut back all regular watering from 15 to 7 minutes twice per week. Also take the time to manually turn on your sprinklers and check for obstructions such as tall grass, leaves or branches, broken or clogged heads, and over-spray. If your sprinklers are misting, your water pressure is too high.

Fall is also the time for seasonal dry Santa Ana winds. If it doesn't rain and a Santa Ana arrives, check the soil moisture before irrigating. For turf, water only when the top one to two inches of soil are dry. It is okay let lawns show signs of stress during a short Santa Ana. Lawns that lose their green luster will rejuvenate with the next irrigation cycle or rain event.

Succulents and drought tolerant plants thrive in dry soil and will not need water for an entire month, or even months, after a rain. The basic rule for succulents or drought tolerant plants is to never water if the soil is wet.

The upcoming cooling off of temperatures, seasonal overcast, and occasional rain create excellent conditions for establishing new plants in Southern California. With a little effort, these gardening tips can help you take advantage of the fall and El Niño to plant water-wise plants and save water in the process.

# DON'T LET YOUR HOLIDAY MEAL CREATE A COSTLY SPILL

*Put fats, oils and grease where they belong!*

Cooking grease is one of the major causes of residential sewer main clogs. Cooking grease coats pipelines, clinging to the insides of the pipe, eventually causing blockages and potential sewer spills. Dispose of small amounts of cooking oil (this includes salad oil, frying oil, bacon fat, and drippings from your holiday meal) in the garbage, not in the drain.

**By following these simple tips, you will help avoid costly repair bills while helping to protect our sewers.**

- Never put grease or oil down your sink, drain, toilet or garbage disposal
- Wipe excess grease from pots, pans, and utensils with a paper towel before washing
- Place grease and cooking oils in a safe container and store it in the refrigerator to solidify, and discard the container in your household garbage.



## Tips for El Niño



This winter parched Californians are eagerly anticipating a major El Niño event that could possibly offer some respite from the on-going drought. So what exactly is an El Niño? The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration explains that it is a positive oscillation of the ocean-atmosphere system in the tropical Pacific, characterized by unusually warm ocean temperatures in the Equatorial Pacific. These conditions have effects across the globe, including increased rainfall, with possible floods occurring through the Southern U.S. With the chance for heavy rains in the 2015-16 weather season, here are some tips to make sure you're prepared for any downpour.

### • Are You in a Flood Zone?

Use FEMA's map service center at [msc.fema.gov/portal](http://msc.fema.gov/portal), and enter your zip code or address to find your official flood map, as well as access a range of other flood hazard products, and take advantage of tools for better understanding flood risk.

### • Sandbags

If you are in a flood prone area, stock-up on sandbags. Sandbags can help protect your home from flooding and soil erosion problems.

### • Take Care on Rainy Roads

Check or replace worn windshield wipers. Properly inflate or replace worn tires. When driving in the rain, turn on your headlights, even in light rain. Most of all, slow down on rain slick roads!

### • Cloudy with a Chance

It's always a good idea to carry a compact umbrella and an extra jacket or sweater. Check local road condition updates and other safety advisories before heading out. If you plan on taking a trip to the mountains, it's always a good idea to carry tire chains.

### • Stay Water Wise

Make sure you update or check your irrigation timer this winter to be sure that your sprinklers don't water while it's raining or for 48 hours after measurable rainfall.

## OTAY WATER DISTRICT - Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 3:30 pm in the Board meeting room. The public is encouraged to attend at 2554 Sweetwater Springs Boulevard, Spring Valley, CA.

### President

Jose Lopez, Division 4  
[jlopez@otaywater.gov](mailto:jlopez@otaywater.gov)

### Vice President

Mitch Thompson, Division 2  
[mthompson@otaywater.gov](mailto:mthompson@otaywater.gov)

### Treasurer

Mark Robak, Division 5  
[OtayWater@cox.net](mailto:OtayWater@cox.net)

### Board Member

Tim Smith, Division 1  
[tsmith@otaywater.gov](mailto:tsmith@otaywater.gov)

### Board Member

Gary Croucher, Division 3  
[gcroucher@otaywater.gov](mailto:gcroucher@otaywater.gov)



For more class information and prices visit [www.thegarden.org](http://www.thegarden.org)



**November 21, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**Faux Artistic Rock and Boulder Making**

Have you ever wanted to DIY and enhance your landscape with artistic rock and boulder art, but don't know where to start? We have the answer! Learn techniques from our master builder, Eider de Mello, in a hands-on class where you will actually build faux realistic rock and boulder art. Members Free, \$10 Non-Members

**December 5, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**December Crafts Workshop**

Do you love crafting and giving hand-made treasures? 'Tis' the season! The Garden's talented Docent Team will guide you in making an array of 'giftable' crafts. You'll complete 5 different crafts and a bonus take home project too! All materials included. Members \$30, Non-Members \$50

**January 23, 2016, 12:30 pm - 4:30 pm**

**Winter Docent Training Program – Part One**

Utilize your skills and talents to contribute to The Garden's success by becoming a Garden docent! There are many ways to get involved and wonderful new people to meet. Applicants to the docent training program must be current members of The Garden to participate. To register, please contact Pam Meisner, Education Director, at [pam@thegarden.org](mailto:pam@thegarden.org) or 619-660-0614 x13.

**ONGOING EVENTS**

**Ask the Designer: Professional Landscape Design Consultations**

The Water Conservation Garden offers 45-minute landscape design consultation services. A professional landscape designer who focuses on drought tolerant landscapes will meet with you, one-on-one. You will leave with a design plan and a list of suggested plants. Bring a photo of your house and area you want redesigned, the dimensions of the space and photos of design styles you like. Call 619-660-0614 ext. 10 to schedule. \$60 Members, \$75 non-Members.

**Ms. Smarty-Plants School Tours and Assembly Program**

Calling all kid groups! Join Ms. Smarty-Plants™ as she takes you on a magical, fun and interactive journey through plant adaptations, the water cycle, conservation and much more. Become a Ms. Smarty-Plants™ Earth Hero! To book an educational tour of The Garden or a school assembly program, contact Education Assistant Jillian Chu at 619-660-6841 x16.

**Give That Tree a Drink**

The weather is finally (and thankfully) cooling as San Diegans await the El Nino rains.

After four long years of drought, even when El Nino arrives, it won't bring us back to normal. So, we need to pay attention to trees. We've been so focused on killing and replacing lawns that we've overlooked the fact that trees are suffering.

Beyond beautifying our gardens, trees generate the oxygen we breathe. Trees remove CO2, one of the greenhouse gases, from the air (that's the process of carbon sequestration). As trees respire, the moisture they release into the atmosphere humidifies it and cools it. Trees hold water in soils and "feed" the microscopic underground flora and fauna that keep soils healthy. Above ground, trees create habitat for wildlife. They shade and cool our homes. Some trees even do us the great favor of making delicious fruits.

It's hard to see the effects of drought on established trees, according to Robin Rivet, La Mesa resident, certified arborist, and urban forester. A tree can suffer for four or five years before it shows visible symptoms like leaf drop, droopy leaves, or browning leaves.

Rivet says that while we can't see it, all the landscape trees across San Diego are in crisis and desperate for water, especially those once surrounded by lawns. The most important thing, now, is to water all your garden trees. Yes, water them.

Does that sound like a conflict with watering restrictions? It isn't. Otay Water District restricts watering times for old-fashioned overhead sprays, which is the worst way to water trees anyway.

Soaker hoses, drip systems, and highly efficient spray heads are not subject to the same runtime limitations, but are limited to running twice a week, between 6 pm and 10 am. But that's a great schedule for watering a tree. Rivet recommends using drip irrigation, soaker hoses or seeping hoses placed slightly inside the tree's drip line (the drip line is the outer edge of the tree's canopy). Turn the water on in early evening and off in early morning. The goal is to slowly saturate the soil under the tree two or three feet deep. Saturating the soil, irrigates the roots.

How often to water depends on your soil and the tree's age. Water penetrates through and drains away quickly from sandy soils, so you might deep soak established trees once or twice a month, newly planted trees more often. Water penetrates clay soils slowly and stays a long time, so deep soak only once every two months or less often for established trees in clay soils, more often for newly planted ones.

Rivet suggests using a straightened out wire clothes hanger to determine how deep the water has penetrated. Poke it into the soil as deep as you can, then pull it up and feel the hanger to see how much of it is damp. That tells you how deep the soil is moist. Wait till the hanger is dry most of the way down before watering established trees again, dry only several inches down before watering newly planted trees again.

Once the rains start and hopefully continue, hold back on watering. But if this winter ends up as dry as last winter, the winter before, the winter before that, and the one before that, you'll be watering all through the season.

# Este otoño deje que 'El Niño' trabaje para usted

El impacto del fenómeno 'El Niño'  
Temporada otoño-invierno



¿Está pensando en quitar el césped sediento y reemplazarlo con plantas ahorradoras de agua? Otoño es el tiempo perfecto para sembrar nuevas plantas y hacer que el fenómeno 'El Niño' trabaje para usted.

'El Niño' es un calentamiento inusual de las temperaturas del mar en la región ecuatorial del océano Pacífico lo cual aumenta la probabilidad de intensas lluvias a lo largo de la parte sur de los Estados Unidos. Se pronostica un fenómeno 'El Niño' intenso durante este otoño e invierno lo cual podría traer grandes cantidades de lluvia al sur de California, y reducir la cantidad de agua que usted necesitará para que las raíces de sus plantas tolerantes a la sequía se establezcan y prosperen. Hay unas cuantas cosas que considerar este otoño que le pueden ayudar a ahorrar agua y dinero.

Más lluvia significa que usted puede reducir el horario de riego. Si hay pronósticos de lluvias apague su sistema de riego y manténgalo así por lo menos durante 48 horas.

Si está nublado, la tierra mantendrá la humedad por más tiempo, absorberá menos agua y podrá causar escorrentía la próxima vez que usted riegue. Siempre recuerde que es importante vigilar si hay escorrentía y ajustar el horario de riego según corresponda (por lo menos una vez al mes, todo el año). Si usted observa que hay escorrentía después de regar unos cuantos minutos, reduzca los tiempos de riego o reparta el tiempo de riego en diferentes horas del día. Si usted no está seguro sobre la cantidad de agua que requiere su césped, rosas, o plantas tolerantes a la sequía, utilice la Calculadora de Irrigación para Jardines que encontrará en [www.otaywater.gov](http://www.otaywater.gov).

El otoño también es buen tiempo para revisar o reemplazar la batería de su programador de riego. Las baterías guardan su horario de riego en caso de un corte de electricidad. Cuando los programadores pierden su horario establecido, riegan un tiempo predeterminado de diez minutos diarios hasta que son programados nuevamente. Esto

puede conducir a riego excesivo, escorrentía, y facturas elevadas en cualquier época del año.

Aún sin precipitaciones, las temperaturas más frías del otoño causan que las plantas, árboles, y arbustos requieran menos agua debido a que existe menos evaporación. A partir del 1.º de noviembre reduzca el riego de 15 a 7 minutos dos veces por semana. También tome el tiempo de prender los aspersores manualmente y revise si hay obstrucciones como pasto alto, hojas, ramas, cabezas de aspersores rotas o tapadas, y exceso de rocío. Si sus aspersores están rociando significa que la presión de agua es muy elevada.

En otoño también comienza la temporada de los vientos secos de Santa Ana. Si no hay precipitaciones y llegan los vientos de Santa Ana, revise la humedad de la tierra antes de regar. En el caso del césped, riéguelo únicamente cuando la primera o segunda pulgada de tierra que está cerca de la superficie se encuentra seca. Está bien dejar que los jardines muestren signos de estrés durante un fenómeno de Santa Ana corto. Los jardines que pierden su color verde brillante van a rejuvenecer en el siguiente ciclo de riego o precipitación.

Las plantas suculentas y tolerantes a la sequía prosperan en tierra seca y no necesitan agua durante todo un mes, o aun meses, después de una lluvia. La regla básica para las suculentas o plantas tolerantes a la sequía es nunca regarlas si la tierra está húmeda.

La disminución de la temperatura, los nublados estacionales y la lluvia ocasional crean condiciones excelentes para que crezcan nuevas plantas en el sur de California. Con un poco de esfuerzo, estos consejos sobre jardinería le pueden ayudar a usted a tomar ventaja del otoño y 'El Niño' para sembrar plantas ahorradoras de agua y bajar su consumo del vital líquido durante este proceso.

FOLLOW OTAY WATER ON... / SIGA AL DISTRITO DE AGUA DE OTAY EN...



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT CALL 619.670.2222 OR GO TO [WWW.OTAYWATER.GOV](http://WWW.OTAYWATER.GOV)