

On Tap

Your newsletter from the Santa Margarita Water District

Salvia 'Bee's Bliss'

This native hybrid sage is known as a gardener's good friend



The *Salvia* 'Bee's Bliss' is welcome in many gardens because of its ability to grow in difficult, dry conditions. An excellent groundcover on slopes, this native California shrub grows low to the ground, never exceeding 2 feet, and can reach 6 to 8 feet wide. Handsome gray-green foliage is topped with a profusion of lavender blue flowers on long spikes in the spring into summer. It spills over a wall, softening hard edges, and maintains a tidy look without much care — or water!

Source: Tree of Life Nursery, San Juan Capistrano



'Bee's Bliss'
Groundcover Sage

Size: 1-2 ft. high; 6-8 ft. wide
Color: Lavender Blue flowers
Bloomtime: Spring
Water: Low
Exposure: Full Sun

Watering Calendar

Listed below is a sample of irrigation guidelines for cool season grass and moderate water plants. We have used clay soil (predominant in SMWD boundaries) with above-ground sprinklers for our calculations. Always check your plants for stress (under-irrigating) and watch for runoff which indicates that the sprinkler run times are too long. Modify accordingly.

Multiple start times in a day are needed as clay soil will not allow water to percolate quickly. This will help limit runoff and wasted water. Sandy or loam soils will allow for longer run times, but these soils are rare in the SMWD boundary.

GRASS

Month	May	Jun	Jul
Maximum minutes per start time	4	4	4
Start times per week*	8	8	10
Total minutes per week	32	32	40

PLANTS

Month	May	Jun	Jul
Maximum minutes per start time	4	4	4
Start times per week*	6	6	7
Total minutes per week	24	24	28

*Start times per week may not equal days per week. Multiple start times per day may be needed to avoid runoff.

A watering guide is also available at www.bewaterwise.com to help homeowners individualize their irrigation controller (timer) settings. This guide is based on plant material, soil type and location (zip code). Irrigation demands vary with the weather (season), plant material and soil conditions.

For more information, please contact Gary Russell at 949-459-6533

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On Tap is published bi-monthly to keep Santa Margarita Water District customers informed about water-related issues and upcoming events. If you have any story ideas or suggestions, please mail them to General Manager John Schatz at 26111 Antonio Parkway, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 or email at johns@smwd.com.

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May 2011 On Tap
Item No. 30154-I-0055

Ready to Respond in an Emergency

Annual training and updated procedures keep SMWD employees prepared

As we know, a reliable water supply is crucial during an emergency as well as the treatment of wastewater. While we cannot prevent disasters from happening, their effects can be reduced or eliminated by having a well-organized emergency response plan in place before an emergency strikes. If a crisis does occur, Santa Margarita Water District employees are trained and ready to respond rapidly and professionally.

The District has also taken steps to ensure it's prepared to operate during an emergency. This includes increasing on-hand inventory supplies to repair possible damages to water and sewer lines, as well as modifying existing infrastructure to make it more resistant to seismic activity.

"We want our customers to know that SMWD has an emergency plan in place to minimize the opportunity for a loss of service or downtime if a natural disaster occurs," said John Schatz, General Manager.

Emergency Response Plan

Each year, SMWD adopts an Emergency Response Plan to guide the District's response to extraordinary situations associated with large-scale, natural disasters and technological incidents. The plan is developed and implemented under a coordinated effort by federal departments and agencies, as well as state and local governments to help ensure multi-jurisdictional coordination.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Pipes at SMWD's reservoirs have been retrofitted with flexible joints to allow movement in the event of an earthquake.

In this Issue

- Governor Ends Drought Declaration
- SMWD's Website Makeover
- Free Home Gardeners Workshops
- Native Plant of the Month: Salvia 'Bee's Bliss'



For questions about your account, upcoming events or general information

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Santa Margarita Water District

Governor Ends State's Drought Declaration

What does it mean to water users?

In March, Governor Brown lifted the three year-old drought declaration put in place in 2008 by then-Governor Schwarzenegger. Heavy rainfall this past season has pushed the Sierra snowpack to 165 percent of its normal level and has replenished the state's reservoirs.

However, while the current water supply is now able to meet today's immediate demand, water users should continue to practice conservation because several factors affect the state's ability to meet future demand.

"The state needs to develop a long-term fix for water supply reliability," said John Schatz, General Manager. "To help stabilize water costs,

infrastructure needs to be in place to sustain us in dry years and store water in wet years."

Full reservoirs and an above-average snowpack only offer short-term help for the state's ongoing water supply challenges. Long-term solutions should include improvements to the state's conveyance system and storage opportunities. Without supply reliability, water costs will only continue to rise. Metropolitan Water District (MWD), the wholesale water agency for Southern California, has increased water rates the past five years and more increases are expected through 2020.

"Drought declarations no longer capture the full extent of the state's ongoing water supply challenges," adds Schatz. "Investments need to be made to our infrastructure to provide supply reliability. Until then, it is misleading to believe our water supply is stable after just one season of wet weather."



Emergency CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Employee Training

As part of the Emergency Response Plan, SMWD employees are trained in disaster response procedures on an annual basis. The District trains with WEROC (Water Emergency Response Organization of Orange County) members to ensure multi-jurisdictional training needs are met. In addition, many SMWD employees receive on-the-job training each week on various subjects to help keep them and our customers safe.

Technology

SMWD has a comprehensive system that monitors the District's vast operating network and alerts staff immediately if there is a loss of integrity within the network. This system, SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition), monitors operations 24/7 and is an integral component to providing the oversight needed to ensure all areas — including domestic water, recycled water and wastewater — are operating correctly. SCADA is tested weekly and upgraded regularly to ensure its ongoing viability.



Real-time monitoring of SMWD's infrastructure.

Seismic Retrofits

In the late 1990's, the District retrofitted the inlet/outlet pipes at each of its reservoirs with seismic couplings to allow for movement in the event of an earthquake, therefore minimizing or preventing damage. This retrofit at the District's 31 domestic water reservoirs and nine recycled water reservoirs is important because it helps ensure the inlet/outlet pipes remain intact and water delivery continues to SMWD customers.

Please visit our website at www.smwd.com for emergency preparedness tips for your home or business in the event of a natural disaster.



SMWD Launches a New, Improved Website

After nearly eight years, SMWD's website received a well-deserved makeover! The newly launched website provides additional online resources and its updated navigation makes it easier to find the information you need — whether it's to pay your bill, sign up or stop service, or search for general information about the District and its operations.

SMWD is committed to providing the highest level of customer service and the website was redesigned with that goal in mind. The new website continues to feature an online chat which connects customers with a live person in SMWD's Customer Relations department. The online chat option is available during the business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Customers are also invited to join SMWD's Facebook and Twitter pages to receive timely information and notifications from the District. These social media links are available on the District's homepage.

www.smwd.com

Get the Most Out of Your Garden

Attend SMWD's FREE Home Gardeners Workshops and learn to beautify your garden — and save water and money!

A series of free Home Gardeners Workshops are available to SMWD customers to enhance your garden and assist in reducing outdoor water usage.

These classes are held on Thursday evenings and are taught through a series of slides, hands-on demonstrations and displays at the District's office at 26111 Antonio Parkway in Rancho Santa Margarita.

Refreshments are provided and classes are limited to 50 attendees. We'd love to see you there!

To make a reservation, please call Tina Trotta at 949-459-6645 or email martinat@smwd.com. For more information, visit www.smwd.com.

Soils, Watering & Fertilizing

Thursday, June 23 • 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Unlock the mysteries of soil and fertilizer, and how they affect plant growth. Topics include:

- Types of soils and ways to identify the type you have in your yard
- How to water properly for your soil type
- Simple tests to avoid "brown spots" in your lawn
- Making the most of your current irrigation system

Also, learn how to choose the right type of fertilizer for your garden to get the biggest blooms, the largest fruits and the healthiest native plants.

California Native Plants & Landscape Sprinkler Systems

Thursday, August 25 • 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

This class is a combination of our two most popular workshops. Learn about 25 common and beautiful plants that are drought-tolerant — guaranteed to look great in your garden and use less water! Also, learn about the major design and maintenance principals of both overhead (pop-up) sprinklers and drip systems. A variety of sprinklers will be on display to help you decide which system will work best for your yard.

