Spring Irrigation and Landscaping Tips

It’s officially spring! Now that the weather is getting warmer, and irrigation systems are being turned on, it is a good time to check your irrigation to ensure everything is working properly. Here are some springtime landscape and irrigation tips:

- **Inspect your irrigation system.** Test your irrigation system to make sure it's functioning properly because issues are not always visible unless the system is running. Look for broken and/or misaligned sprinkler heads (to avoid water on driveways and sidewalks) and leaking pipes. Check drip irrigation for broken and/or missing emitters, breaks in the drip lines and any other damage.
- **Check the batteries.** Irrigation controllers sometimes revert to factory settings after even a brief power outage. Check the batteries in your controller every 6 months and replace as needed to ensure your controller continues to run properly.
- **Soil moisture is key.** The soil may look dry on the surface but it can be wet at root level. Use a soil moisture meter or screwdriver to go down a couple of inches into the soil and see if the soil is still moist.
- **Just add mulch.** Now is the time to add a layer of 3 to 4 inches of mulch around your plants to retain moisture, protect against the summer heat and suppress weeds.

City of Davis water users have done a great job conserving water whether we are in a dry or wet year. It is important to be mindful of water use year round and to take actions to reduce water usage long term. California’s Save Our Water Rebate program still has funds available for converting turf to low water use landscapes. For more information on this program, and how to apply, visit [SaveOurWaterRebates.com](http://SaveOurWaterRebates.com). Other ways to save water and increase long-term water use efficiency include replacing high water use appliances and fixtures with EPA WaterSense labeled models, replacing traditional irrigation controllers with weather-based controllers and installing a rain sensor that automatically turns off irrigation when it rains. You can also sign-up for the city’s online customer water use portal, AquaHawk, to view your hourly water usage, and set alerts to be notified when abnormal water use is detected.

Visit [SaveDavisWater.org](http://SaveDavisWater.org) for even more water savings tips, information on AquaHawk, water-wise landscaping and helpful indoor and outdoor water use efficiency information.

**Keeping Litter Out of Stormwater**

In recent years, more and more litter, particularly plastic, is finding its way into our waterways. When litter is left on the ground, it can be blown or washed directly into creeks and rivers. More frequently though, litter is carried by wind and water into street gutters, where it is washed down stormdrain inlets and carried directly to local ponds and waterways. As it breaks down, litter is frequently mistaken for food in the aquatic environment, often killing the animals that eat it. Plastics especially act as magnets for toxic chemicals, and once they are eaten by animals, the plastics and toxins within them can enter the food chain.
Recognizing the seriousness of litter in waterways, the State of California has mandated that cities must capture all materials from their stormwater runoff that are 5 mm in size (the size of a cigarette butt) or larger. Davis has until 2030 to comply with this requirement. As the City continues to measure and mitigate litter, we can all do our part to reduce the impact of litter on our environment:

- Place waste in the correct bin (trash, recycling or organics) and keep the bin lids closed to prevent waste from being blown out.
- Avoid generating more waste by purchasing products that use the least amount of packaging.
- Avoid single-use plastics such as plastic straws, cup lids, and bags whenever possible.
- Bring your own reusable bags for fresh produce instead of using plastic produce bags.
- Choose products that are compostable or recyclable whenever possible.

Another way to keep our streets clean is to use your organics cart as much as possible and only utilize the on-street yard material piles for excess yard materials that do not fit.

**Water Softener Usage Survey**

Since the city introduced surface water in June 2016, the average level of hardness in the water has decreased, as surface water is naturally softer than local groundwater.

The city is conducting a survey to receive feedback from the Davis community on the use of water softeners and any adjustments that may have been made in usage due to the change in water hardness. The survey will be open from April 2 to May 31.

Participants who complete the survey and provide an email address will be entered into a weekly raffle for an environmental kit! Thank you to those of you who have already completed the survey since its release. If you have not already done so, please take the survey now at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/daviswssurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/daviswssurvey).

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