HOW TO SAVE WATER
IN YOUR GARDEN AND LANDSCAPE

Did you know that you can save 20 to 50 percent of the water you currently use in your garden and landscape and actually improve your plants' health?

Many people think that to save water they need to replace their current landscape with strictly "drought tolerant" plants, perhaps removing their lawn altogether. While drought tolerant landscapes and lawn removal could be useful options, they are just two of the many strategies that can be employed to reduce water use.

Remember that trees provide beauty, shade, cooling, privacy, and oxygen. They can also significantly increase property value. Even when water is in short supply, taking care of your trees should be a high priority.

TRY THESE WATER-WISE TIPS:

- When selecting plants consider their climate suitability for the site.
- Check your sprinkler system for leaks and make necessary repairs (Table 1, on back).
- Water early in the morning before sunrise.
- Avoid watering during windy times of the day to reduce water waste.
- Control weeds which compete for water, light, and nutrients.
- Fertilize moderately (the low end of recommended rates) to avoid excessive growth, which increases water needs
- Apply three to four inches of mulch around trees and other woody plants. Mulches reduce evaporation from soil, lower soil temperatures, and reduce weeds. Use backyard compost, decomposed lawn clippings, bark, composted manure, or other bagged products.
- Reduce runoff on slopes by cycling water in several short intervals. Apply water only until runoff begins. Wait an equal amount of time then repeat watering until runoff begins again. Repeat this cycling until the soil has been moistened to about one foot deep.
- Prune trees and other woody plants only when necessary. Pruning stimulates shoot growth, which increases water needs.
- Water trees and other woody plants separately from the lawn, since it is best to water them less frequently but more deeply.
- Water trees and other woody plants to a depth of two feet to help promote a deep root system. You can use a soil probe, screwdriver, auger, or straightened coat hanger to find out how deep the water reached. These tools will readily penetrate a moist soil, but will resist penetration in dry soil.
- Consider installing a drip system that applies water through emitters directly at the root zone where it is needed most and not wasted.
- The type of soil you have largely determines how often you should water:

  Clay soils may only need to be watered once during a given period while sandy soils may need two or three waterings during the same time.

  Add organic soil amendments to sandy soils and thoroughly mix them into the upper foot. This can increase the water-holding capacity of the soil and the interval between waterings.
- Aerate lawns and ground around trees and other plants. Many local rental businesses can provide soil aerators.
- Remove the accumulation of old grass roots, stems, and leaves, called thatch, on your lawn. Thatch acts as a barrier to keep water out of the soil.
- Check faucets, hoses, and sprinklers for leaks. A new rubber washer is inexpensive and easy to install.
- Mow your lawn at the correct height:

  Common Bermuda grass, 1 inch
  Hybrid Bermuda grass ½-¾ inch
  Tall Fescue 1½-3 inches
  Perennial Ryegrass and Kentucky Blue grass 1½ inches.
- Consider replacing turf with low-water use plants.
- Reduce the size of your lawn.
- Turn off sprinklers when run-off starts.

To determine the best irrigation schedule for your lawn visit the lawn watering guide at:
http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu

For answers to gardening questions contact the Master Gardener Hot Line: 209.533.5912

Email: mgtuolumne@ucanr.edu

Website: http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu

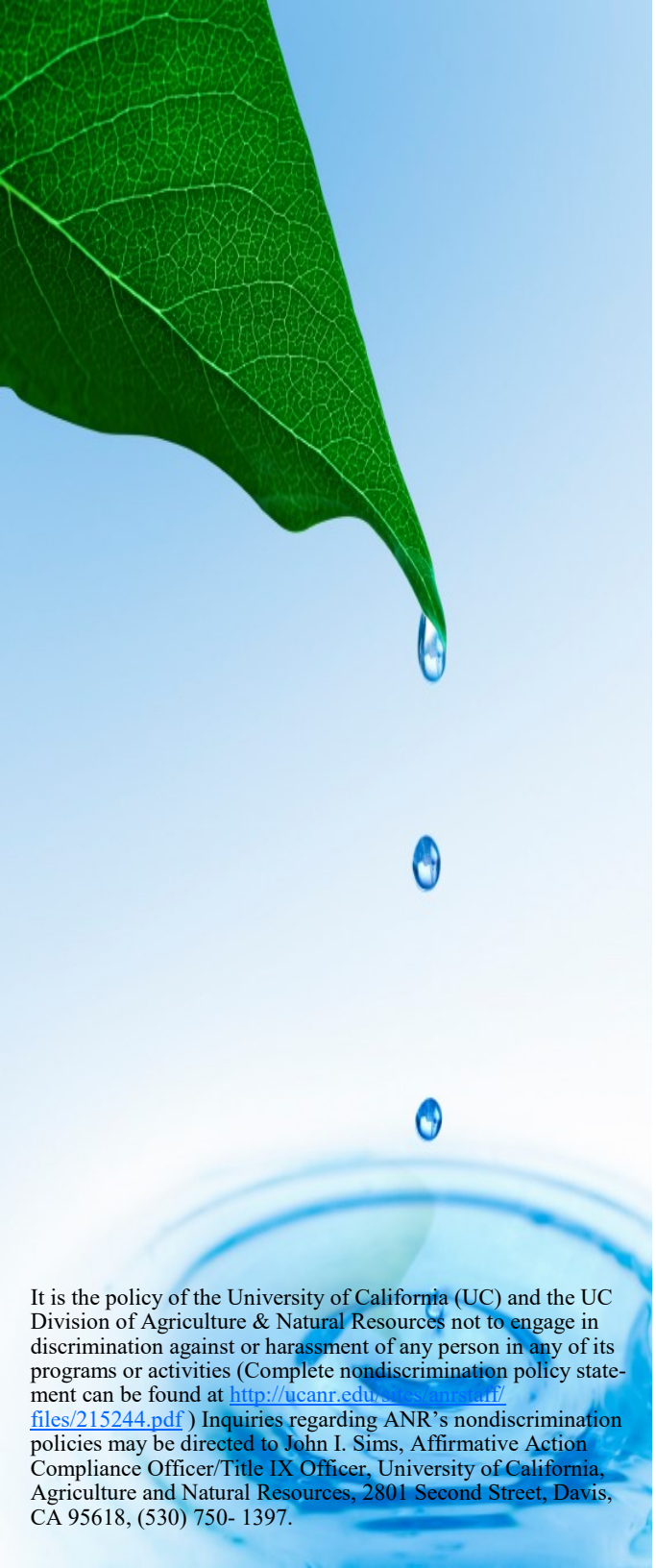

TABLE 1
COMMON SPRINKLER PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

PROBLEM	SOLUTION
Broken Sprinkler	Replace with a sprinkler that applies water at the same rate
Uneven Distribution	Replace with matched sprinklers
Sunken or blocked sprinklers	Raise the sprinklers or replace risers; remove vegetation blocking the water
Crooked sprinklers	Straighten to an upright position
Grass preventing sprinkler from functioning	Mow or chemically remove grass around sprinklers
Sand or debris plugging	Flush out sprinklers to remove debris; replace sprinklers as necessary
Spraying in wrong direction	Realign sprinkler

Ask your nursery or garden center professional for additional information and assistance about how to save water in your garden and landscape.

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