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D the G - - Spring, 2015

Hello Fellow Rosarians,

Water has been the issue in Southern California and will loom larger with the coming warm season, further restrictions, and cost on its usage. The DWP sent up a test balloon and has suggested a 40% reduction in water usage. A reduction in water usage will not necessarily mean a reduction in the cost of water. As has happened before, reduced usage means loss of revenue for the DWP. The DWP will raise rates for water. Gasoline tax follows a similar path. Because of vehicles that have better fuel economy less money from taxes is available. It was suggested that a \$1.00 per week surcharge be enacted to offset the loss of revenue due to lower amounts of usage of gasoline.

What can be done! Let's take a look back a few hundred years and have a look at a more modern day take on water resources. Ancient cultures had developed high intelligence/low technology systems that were very effective in harvesting and storing water. The Inca, in Peru, had a marvelous system that harvested water delivered by clouds or fog condensing on rock faces being fed into troughs. In India, an ancient system to capture and store water still works very well. The most current method of wise water usage comes from Israel. The Israelis developed drip systems in the 1940's that have enabled the desert to become a green and productive agricultural area.

What do these methods of water conservation and usage mean to us today? The answer is an enormous amount! Drip, micro, and modified drip systems for water delivery have come to be a major consideration and necessity in any landscape.

The sprinkler timer in my garden delivers water 2 minutes on A and then 2 minutes B. That comes to 12 minutes per week in the middle of summer. Dry soil does not efficiently absorb water. 12 minutes per week is plenty of water for my garden. The key to using less water is to 'mulch' deeply!

I have one off-the-grid source of water: It comes from the condensation line for our air conditioner. Two to six gallons of water are produced daily depending on the amount of relative humidity. I discovered this source of water after the whole house air conditioner was installed. My dear wife is from the great city of San Francisco, where summer temperatures may be as high as 55 degrees. She must have loved me to move to the wilds of the West San Fernando Valley. Not one to push my luck, the air conditioner was installed.

A very good and legal source of water is 'grey water'. This is water that comes from our showers or laundry. It is necessary to secure a permit from the city and to pay a yearly 'surcharge'. Grey water cannot be sprayed; it must be delivered subsurface. Grey water is extremely efficient in watering any ornamental plant. Enough grey water is generated in every household to handle all of the ornamental plants. Fruit trees, herbs and vegetables must be watered using fresh water.

Another way to use less water in the landscape is to garden using plants that require less water. Plants native to Southern California, and plants that are California friendly, are good choices. There are five areas in the world with a climate similar to that in Los Angeles: Southern California, the Mediterranean, South Africa, Central Chili, and Australia. [Rainfall in the Los Angeles area](#) is extremely fickle and ranges between 3 1/2 inches and 39 inches per year, since records were kept in 1887. What the future

Roses Feeding the Soul

The setting sun on a hill
sprinkled with roses,
Paints a relief of
intricate poses.
It is a haven of beauty
in which to feed
the soul.

It is a richness worth
much more than
precious gold.

--Russell A. Baum

brings is beyond my ability to guess.

Other plants to consider in the garden: The orchid is a cold hardy type called 'Bletilla Strata'. This type of orchid does well planted in the ground and left alone. Since I went mad for the color blue this year, the following plants are nourishing to me. The violet is 'Viola Labradorica'. It grows about 3 inches tall and spreads by seed. I turned it loose under my mini roses, and I much enjoy its blue/violet flowers and prim leaf at ground level. The bush that will soon be a tree is a 'Ceanothus Ray Hartman'. It has sweetly scented flowers that last for a few months. The last blue flower is a 'Campanula Azuleas'. Campanula Azuleas is a native flower that grows from seed. If allowed to go to seed, it will return somewhere in the garden. If it comes up where I like, it stays; if not, it's gone.

A good source for California native plants is the Theodore Payne Foundation for the Study of California Native Plants. It is located at 10459 Tuxford St. in Sun Valley. The phone number is 818-768-1802 and the web address is, www.theodorepayne.org. Theodore Payne has absolutely fantastic employees. They are plant nerds with vast knowledge. The seed room is second to none! The nursery has an extensive selection based on seasonal availabilities. The TPF is located at the end of a road against the hills. This means that walks and lectures are offered. There is also a Wild Flower Hotline, 818-768-1802.

In Ventura County, the Matillija Nursery, in Moorpark, California, is a very good nursery for native plants for two reasons. 1. The quality of the plants, and 2. The knowledge that the owner, Bob, has to offer regarding the specifics of the plants. Their phone number is 805-523-8604. The nursery is located at 8225 Walters Road in Moorpark, California and the web address is www.matilijanursery.com.

An out of state nursery to look at is High Country Gardens. This nursery has a great selection of seeds, bulbs, and plants that would work in the gardens in and around L.A. Have a look at the selections online. A little bit of experimentation broadens the garden's palate. Their phone number is 800-925-9387, and their web address is www.highcountrygardens.com.

Happy Gardening,
D the G
Dave's Greenscapes