

# The Chuparosa

Chapter Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 8 - October 2016



## Why we need to create wildlife-friendly backyards



Native bees are often in our backyards without us knowing it and are easily attracted with native plants, like this desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*). Note the pollen she is carrying on her hind legs.

By Dr. Christopher McDonald

It's easy to forget nature is everywhere. We drive on roads, shop in stores, sleep in climate-controlled bedrooms, and view our mountains and desert in the distance or when on a hike.

It's a misconception that wild things are only out there and they are not here, where people are, in cities. To

make things worse, the wild animals in our cities are often not wanted: rats, mice, gophers, snakes and maybe coyotes. When most people think about viewing wildlife they are thinking of large mammals like bears, deer or raccoons and maybe some reptiles or amphibians. People pay attention to these animals, they travel to national parks to see them, and we

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## Our Next Meeting: October 26 at 6 p.m.

Joshua Tree National Park has used native plants to restore impacted areas in the park for over 30 years. Seeds are collected within five miles of project locations and planted in the park's nursery, called the Center for Arid Lands Restoration.

Despite many success stories, the restoration program faces tough challenges in the future that the park is working to overcome. Speaker Neil Frakes, Vegetation Branch Chief in the Division of Resource Management at JTNP, will introduce us to the center and to some of its success stories.

Frakes, who has been at JTNP since 2015, oversees a variety of vegetation based

programs at the park, including native plant restoration, invasive plant species management, field botany and climate change monitoring.

**5:30 p.m.** Plant exchange. Bring pups, cuttings, plants to share with others. Even if cannot bring plants feel free to adopt and watch your garden grow. **See page 3!**

**6 p.m.** Regular DHSCV meeting with presentation by Neil Frakes

**7:30 p.m.** Refreshments

**Where:** Hoover Room, The Living Desert, 47-900 Portola Ave., Palm Desert. Free

## More Upcoming Events

Here's a cache of events and meetings of interest to members of the Desert Horticultural Society of the Coachella Valley and fellow gardening enthusiasts. Read more at [www.deserthorticulturalsociety.org](http://www.deserthorticulturalsociety.org).

### Ongoing Mondays free help:

Through May 2017. Master Gardeners will be at the UC Cooperative Extension office in Indio to answer gardening questions, help solve gardening problems. Free. Drops-ins, telephone calls, emails welcome. 81-077 Indio Blvd., Suite H. (760) 342-2511, [anrmgindio@ucanr.edu](mailto:anrmgindio@ucanr.edu)

**Oct. 15 11th annual Desert Garden Community Day:** Classes, demonstrations, information booths feature garden design and plant selection, DIY grass removal, irrigation, mulching, pruning and more. Special guest presenter Johanna Silver will talk about her new book, *The Bold Dry Garden*. 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. UCR Palm Desert, 75-080 Frank Sinatra Drive, Palm Desert. [Deserthorticulturalsociety.org](http://Deserthorticulturalsociety.org)

**Oct. 17 Presentations by author Andrea Wulf:** "Founding Gardeners", 2-3:30 p.m. Rancho Mirage Library, 71-100 Highway 111. "The Invention of Nature," 5 p.m. reception, 6-7:30 p.m. talk, UCR Palm Desert,

75-080 Frank Sinatra Drive, Palm Desert. Both free.

**Oct. 19 UCR Master Gardener info:** Learn about becoming a Master Gardener at UCR Palm Desert. 9-11 a.m. Free. 75-080 Frank Sinatra Drive, Palm Desert. RSVP: [rmolaiz@ucanr.edu](mailto:rmolaiz@ucanr.edu)

**Oct. 20 "Edible Gardening and Permaculture Design":** By Desert Area Master Gardener Susan LeSage Krings. Free. 4:30-5:30 p.m. Cathedral City Library, 33-520 Date Palm Drive.

**Oct. 22, 23 UC Riverside Botanic Gardens Fall Plant Sale:** 11 a.m.-4

## Events, cont'd

p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday. Plant list available Oct. 15. Will include trees, shrubs, vines, herbaceous plants, shade plants, water plants, house and patio plants, seeds, cacti, succulents. 900 University Ave., Riverside. <http://gardens.ucr.edu>, (951) 784-6962

**Oct. 22 Water in the Coachella Valley:** Lecture on the valley's water sources, how to cut water consumption. 9-11:30 a.m. Free. CVWD Steve Robbins Administration Building, 75-515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert. (760) 398-2651

**Oct. 27 Eco-Discovery Tour:** Big Morongo Canyon Preserve with Robin Kobaly: 8 a.m.-11 a.m. Now part of the Sand to Snow National Monument, Big Morongo Creek is a lush oasis and freshwater marsh for songbirds, bighorn sheep, mule deer, and more. 3-hour stream-side excursion. Robin will identify and describe uses of native desert plants for food, medicine, tools, clothing, and shelter. 1055 East Drive, Morongo Valley, CA 92256. \$20. [www.powerofplants.com](http://www.powerofplants.com), [robin@powerofplants.com](mailto:robin@powerofplants.com), (760) 363-1166.

**Oct. 29 Backyard composting:** Learn how to make compost. By Riverside County Waste Management Department. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Geobin compost bins will be available for \$12. CVWD Steve Robbins Administration Building, 75-515

Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert. (760) 398-2651

**Oct. 30 (new date) Southwest Native Plants for Food, Fun & Healing:** Native plant expert Robin Kobaly presents ancient, traditional uses of native desert plants, demonstrates ways to adapt them to fit today's needs for food, medicines, art, utility. 12:30-3:30 p.m. The Plant Yoda's Den, Morongo Valley. \$45. [www.powerofplants.com](http://www.powerofplants.com), [robin@powerofplants.com](mailto:robin@powerofplants.com), (760) 363-1166.

**Nov. 12 Medicinal Plant Walk:** By Jim Adams, certified Chumash Indian healer. 9-11:30 a.m. Free. Meet at Chorizo Canyon trail head, just north of Big Horn on Highway 74. Easy hike. Free. No host lunch at Daily Grill on El Paseo.

**Nov. 16 Pruning:** Learn basics on how to prune trees, shrubs by local pruning expert Al Hollinger. 5:30-7 p.m. CVWD Steve Robbins Administration Building, 75-515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert. (760) 398-2651

**Nov. 17 "Changing Traditional Landscaping to Desert Landscaping":** A homeowner's perspective, by Master Gardeners Patty and Dick Reed. Free. 4:30-5:30 p.m. Cathedral City Library, 33-520 Date Palm Drive.

**Nov. 19 The Joy of Gardening with Desert Native Plants:** How to

plant, irrigate, care for native plant gardens. 12:30-4:30 p.m. The Plant Yoda's Den, Morongo Valley. \$45. [www.powerofplants.com](http://www.powerofplants.com), [robin@powerofplants.com](mailto:robin@powerofplants.com), (760) 363-1166.

**Dec. 8 Field trip:** 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sherman Library & Garden, Roger's Garden & Nursery, Corona del Mar, Roger's Garden Nursery, Irvine. Holiday plant decorations galore. No host lunch. Library admission \$5. Car pool leaves Wellness Park at 8:30 a.m.

## Plant exchange moves

Usually when DHSCV members meet at the Living Desert, the parking lot is mostly empty. That won't be the case at our next meeting on Wednesday, Oct 26. The Energy Water Green Living Summit is hosting a cocktail party there and expects about 200 guests.

Our meeting will still be held at the usual time and place – 6 p.m. in the Hoover Room. However, since the parking lot will be fuller and probably more in and out traffic, we'll move the popular plant exchange that is usually held in the parking lot to the Education Patio, just inside the entry gate.

The plant exchange starts at 5:30 p.m. You can bring pups, cuttings and plants to share with others. Members don't necessarily have to "exchange"; most often there are plenty of plants to take.



## Best time, place to learn about desert gardening

Join the desert's landscape and garden enthusiasts at UCR Palm Desert on Saturday, Oct. 15 from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. for workshops, demonstrations and informational exhibits at our 11th annual Desert Garden Community Day.

Learn how to create and maintain a lush, low-water garden at this free event presented by DHSCV and sponsored by host UCR Palm Desert.

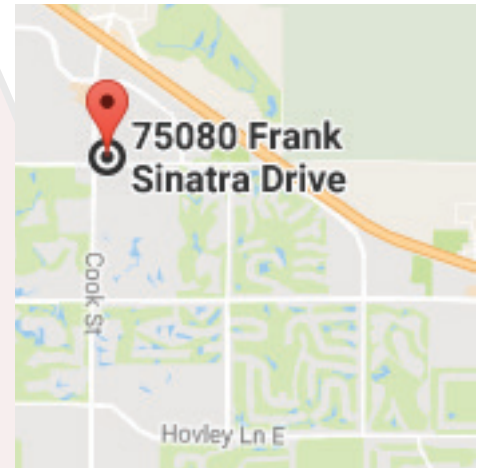
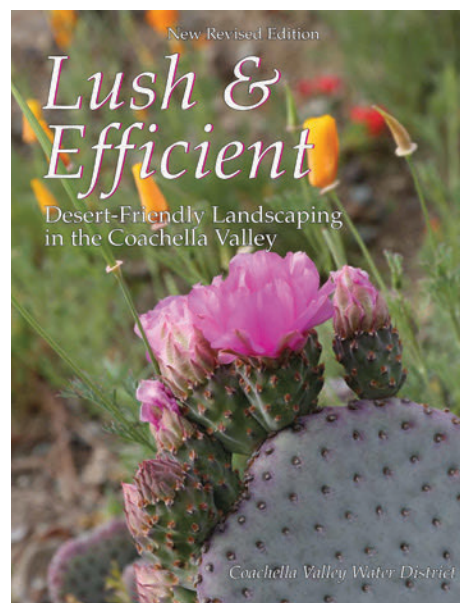


Special guest presenter Johanna Silver joins a host of desert garden experts who will show participants how to create and maintain a desert-friendly garden and reduce water requirements, responding to Southern California's ongoing drought conditions and water restrictions. She will talk about her new book, The Bold Dry Garden: Lessons from the Ruth Bancroft Garden (Timber Press, September 2016).

Classes and demonstrations include garden design, DIY grass remov-

al, irrigation practices, patio and courtyard (small garden) design, proper pruning techniques, growing vegetables in the desert, and much more. Desert Garden Community Day has something for novice and expert gardeners, including exhibits and information booths from local businesses, water agencies, garden clubs and others that support desert-friendly gardening, all free of charge.

In addition, a new, revised version of the popular desert-gardening book, Lush & Efficient, will debut at Desert Garden Community Day. The book, now called Lush & Efficient: Desert-Friendly Landscaping in the Coachella Valley, is published and distributed by Coachella Valley Water District in partnership with Desert Water Agency.



UCR Palm Desert is at 75-080 Frank Sinatra Drive, Palm Desert. Attendees will be directed where to park. Class schedules, speakers and additional information are available online on our website, [deserthorticulturalsociety.org](http://deserthorticulturalsociety.org) or on Facebook at [facebook.com/DesertHorticulturalSociety](https://facebook.com/DesertHorticulturalSociety)

## Help make the day a success

You can still volunteer to help at Garden Day. Duties might include manning the membership, information and check-in booths; directing participants to classrooms, answering questions, helping at the book signing table and breaking down at the end of the day.

Volunteer hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Shifts are a maximum of 3 hours. Those interested should contact Jeanine Black at [volunteers@deserthorticulturalsociety.org](mailto:volunteers@deserthorticulturalsociety.org).

## From the Board

Among matters the DHSCV Board of Directors discussed, reviewed or approved at its Sept. 27 meeting are:

Jessyca Frederick gave an update on progress toward creating a new web site for DHSCV. It is expected to be up and running by Nov. 1.

Jessyca Frederick also reported on the survey sent to members in September. Results will be collated and reported at the January membership meeting.

It was reported that the society has dues-paying 566 members.

Tracy Merrigan discussed a group that wants to eradicate invasive plants. It is planning events for the winter season. More specifics will be announced.

A clean-up of the north parking lot garden at UCR Palm Desert is being coordinated for Oct. 12 by Jamie Lee Pricer and the Master Gardeners.

Two scholarships in the name of the

late Society president Mary Brent Wehrli will be awarded to students transferring to 4-year colleges or universities. Vintage Nursery-sponsored scholarships will be given to high school students. Presentation will be at Garden Day on Oct. 15.

The Board will suggest several changes to the By-laws at the Oct. 26 meeting, and ask for an approval by members. One relates to annual membership fee and alignment of the fiscal year; another adds 11 standing committees to the By-laws.

## Sunset garden editor, noted author to speak here

Members have three opportunities in October to hear free talks by two renowned authors. One is an expert gardener. The other is a best-selling horticultural historian.

**Johanna Silver, garden editor at *Sunset Magazine***, will be the guest presenter Oct. 15 at the Society's annual Community Garden Day, this year at UCR Palm Desert. She is expected to show how to create and maintain a desert-friendly garden with reduced watering. She will also talk about her book, *The Bold Dry Garden: Lessons from the Ruth Bancroft Garden*, released in September.

She designs and builds small-scale gardens for publication in the magazine. She contributes regularly to Fresh Dirt, Sunset's gardening blog, and to its James Beard Award-win-

ning blog, the One-Block Diet.

Silver travels the Western U.S. and covers trends in agriculture and gardening, from peony farming in Homer, Alaska to the front lines of landscape design in Los Angeles. She is a frequent lecturer on drought tolerant, container and edible gardening for local organizations and at garden shows across the West.

**Historian Andrea Wulf** will give two talks in the Coachella Valley on Oct. 17 – from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at the Rancho Mirage Library and from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at UCR Palm Desert. The latter will start with a reception from 5 to 6 p.m.

At the library, Wulf will discuss her book *Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and*

*the Shaping of the American Nation*.

It's the story of how six men in England and the very young United States created the modern garden and changed the horticultural world.

At UCR, she will talk about *The Invention of Nature*, the extraordinary life of the visionary German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) and how he created the way we understand nature today.

Wulf's byline appears in many notable newspapers and she writes a column on the history of science for *The Atlantic*. She appears regularly on BBC television and radio.

Information and RSVPs: [ranchomiragelibrary.org](http://ranchomiragelibrary.org), [palmdesert.ucr.edu](http://palmdesert.ucr.edu)



## Desert gardener's Bible

New Lush & Efficient emphasizes low-water use landscapes

By Heather Engel

The popular desert-gardening book, *Lush & Efficient*, has been revised to include even more information and tips for creating a beautiful desert landscape that preserves and protects our most precious resource: water.

The book, now called *Lush & Efficient: Desert-Friendly Landscaping in the Coachella Valley*, is published and distributed by Coachella Valley Water District in partnership with Desert Water Agency.

The new revised edition will debut at this year's Desert Garden Community Day from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 15 at UCR Palm Desert. The 11th Annual Desert Garden Community Day, a free program of the Desert Horticultural Society of the Coachella Valley and Host Sponsor UCR Palm Desert, will feature experts explaining how to create and maintain a desert garden and reduce your water requirements. Classes, demonstrations and informational booths feature garden design, plant selection, DIY grass removal, irrigation, mulching, pruning, and much more will be included.

After Oct. 15, *Lush & Efficient* will be available for purchase at other events and online for \$10 through CVWD's website, [www.cvwd.org](http://www.cvwd.org)

The book provides alternatives to traditional high-water, high maintenance

saves time, money and water.

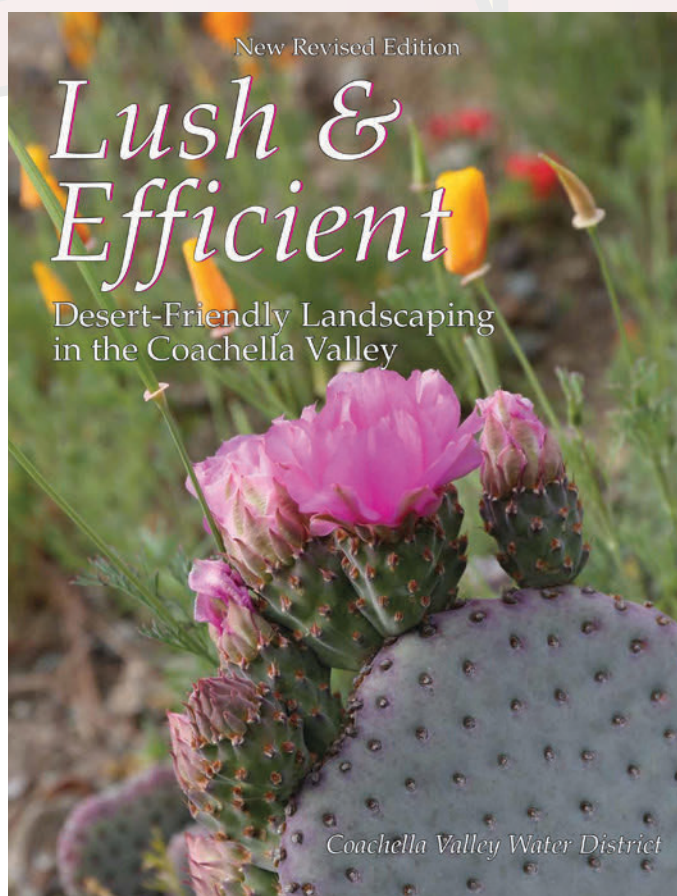
The book also includes a chapter about water-efficient irrigation that provides a guide to irrigation components and terms and ways to diagnose irrigation problems. The chapter also provides an irrigation guide for trees, shrubs and groundcovers in the Coachella Valley.

Converting to desert-friendly landscaping, eliminating overseeding and removing turf all will help your water budget. This is especially true in light of new volumetric rate changes that went into effect on July 1, the first rate increases for domestic water since 2010. Increases in fixed rates are expected to go into effect this fall.

The new *Lush & Efficient* can guide your efforts to transform areas that were traditionally turf into beautiful desert-friendly landscaping. You can also take advantage of CVWD guidance and rebates to make the

transition easier. Visit [www.cvwd.org/rebates](http://www.cvwd.org/rebates) to apply and learn more.

Heather Engel is the director of Communication & Conservation for the Coachella Valley Water District. [heengel@cvwd.org](mailto:heengel@cvwd.org), (760) 398-2661



nance landscapes. It explains how to grow more than 340 desert-friendly plants and features almost 500 color photos, providing a wealth of information on how to create a landscape that is colorful, attractive to hummingbirds and butterflies and also

## Wildlife gardens, cont'd

house them in museums and zoos to build appreciation and awareness of them. And we have been missing half the picture.

We have been missing interesting and beautiful creatures. There are hundreds of less noticeable, but just as important, wildlife species that oftentimes live next to us. The beauty of a butterfly, the camouflage of a moth, native bees gathering pollen to sustain their young are surely worth seeing and cultivating.

Wildlife is described as animals that have not been domesticated by people, basically any 'wild' animal. This includes animals we typically do not think of as wildlife: butterflies, moths, bees, birds, beetles, worms, lizards, and a whole host of other critters. Many of this wildlife are mostly harmless, are fun to watch and with some work they can thrive in our urban and suburban areas.

Our urban landscapes provide variety of functions for us. We want to play in our backyards, have friends over for a party, let the dog run around or grow tasty food. We want something aesthetically pleasing and colorful to look at. We may also want something to lift up our spirits, fulfill us and offer peace and tranquility. Most often we want our yards to accomplish many of these tasks. Having a wildlife-friendly backyard can also work with our traditional landscapes.

Creating wildlife-friendly backyards is relatively easy, but like most good deeds it takes work and planning. Starting small is often a good option. The trick to success is adding the right kinds of food, shelter and water in your landscape.

The biggest change will come when native plants are added, although it may take some time for wildlife to find and use those native plants. Most wildlife thrives on native plants. They have been eating or using native plants for thousands of years and their lives are intertwined, often in a complex symbiosis.

As the human population increases and wildlife habitat is converted for human uses, many wildlife populations are in decline, in the US and globally, while only a few populations are increasing. Traditional urban landscape design focuses on creating an environment that suits human needs and little thought or design is given to building habitat for backyard-friendly wildlife.



Some backyard wildlife is tiny, like this lacewing egg. The female lays a single egg at the end of a thin stalk to protect it from ants. Lacewing larvae are predators and will eat a wide variety of small insects. Lacewings in a garden signify a robust food chain.



Predatory insects, such as this praying mantis, are attracted to wildlife-friendly backyards when enough prey species are present. After a meal some praying mantises will clean their face and front legs similar to a cat.

With a little work and ingenuity we can create landscapes that are both pleasing to people and to wildlife, especially the wildlife that we want in our backyards: butterflies, moths, birds and native bees.

**Editor's note:** Future *Chuparosa* editions will feature a series of articles on how to build wildlife-friendly backyards in the desert.

*Dr. Christopher McDonald is an Inland and Desert Natural Resources Manager at the University of California Cooperative Extension. [cjmcdonald@ucanr.edu](mailto:cjmcdonald@ucanr.edu)*



## What to do in your garden in October

By Staff reports

Temperatures in the valley leave the three-digit range, for the most part this month. October is one of the best months to work in the garden.

Plants are perking up as we hit the most important planting season of the year, which reaches a peak by Oct. 15. By then winter and spring annual color such as petunias, snapdragons and pansies should be in the soil.

### Things to consider

It's still not the time to plant everything. Cold-tender tropical and subtropical plants such as citrus do

best planted in the spring.

Nurseries offer bountiful fresh plants in containers, flats, small pots and 4-inch pots. Inspect plants carefully, especially the roots. If roots go round and round at the bottom of the container, the plant has been in the container too long.

Pre-moisten soil before you plant.

Water plants in gently after planting and continue to water as they begin to be established.

Avoid excessive water. Dig down into the soil with a trowel to 6 inches to make sure water penetration is adequate.

First half of the month is a good time to plant cool-season, leafy vegetables. Cooler soil in the second half of the month will cause plants to mature more slowly.

The best wildflower seeding period is from Oct. 15 to Nov. 15. Pre-moisten soil before sowing seeds.

There's still time to plant most trees and shrubs, including desert trees, shrubs and hardy cacti.

Sources: Lush and Efficient: Gardening in the Coachella Valley, by CVWD, The Desert Gardener's Calendar by George Brookbank

## Insects 101: Desert Dune Beetle



Photo & Text By Brian K. Rolf

**Common name:** Desert dune beetle

**Scientific name:** *Edrotes ventricosus*

**Size:** ~½ inch

**Range:** Found primarily in sand dunes in the desert southwest

Desert dune beetles, sometimes called desert hairy beetles, are fairly common in the dune areas of Southern California.

These curious little beetles are nocturnal and so are not seen very often. If they are uncovered from a hiding spot they seek cover by quickly burrowing into the sand dunes.

Brian K. Rolf is owner of Seattle Bug Safari, a traveling bug zoo. [brolf@seattlebugsaferi.com](mailto:brolf@seattlebugsaferi.com), (425) 829-4869



## This & That

### ***If you must overseed, try using less water***

Desert Water Agency suggests its customers skip overseeding, but says if you must, then take “great care to do it with less water.”

In the DWA fall News, the west valley agency says is “is allowing daily watering before 7 a.m. and after 7 p.m. Oct. 10-31 with a maximum of 10 minutes per valve per day for efficient overseeding (30 minutes for rotors).

“If you are overseeding, be sure to keep seeds moist but not soaked. If you have 10 minutes to water, consider using five two-minute cycles during permitted hours.”

DWA has lawn signs for customers who skip overseeding to go golden for the winter months. Even so, these customers should still water their dormant grass occasionally to keep the Bermuda roots in good health.  
[dwa.org](http://dwa.org)

### ***DWA to start winter watering schedule***

Since less water is needed to properly maintain landscaping in cooler months, Desert Water Agency will return to its Monday, Wednesday and Friday outdoor watering sched

### ***Continued on page 9***

ule starting on Nov. 1. Watering will continue to be allowed only before 7 a.m. and after 7 p.m. [dwa.org](http://dwa.org)

### ***Save a few bucks***

Desert Water Agency has arranged coupon discounts on recycled water car washes and pool treatments for all valley residents.

To participate, go to [dwa.org/rebate](http://dwa.org/rebate) and click on and print the coupons or save to your cell phone.

Airport Quick Wash, 4144 E. Ramon Road, Palm Springs, offers \$5 off any service and \$5 off an oil change with a free car wash. (760) 864-7150

Green Clean Express Wash, 67-400 E. Ramon Road, Cathedral City, offers \$2 off a car wash. (760) 861-1121.

Two companies are offering 20 % off a reverse osmosis treatment for your pool. This is how that works: A mobile filtration unit comes to your property and pumps water out of the pool and puts in through reverse osmosis treatment. That removes particulates and sends clean water back to the pool and may eliminate the need to drain and refill a pool.

The companies are: Purified Pool Water, [purifyyourpool.com/dwa](http://purifyyourpool.com/dwa) and

Roadrunner Pool Service, [Thepoolstores.com/service](http://Thepoolstores.com/service), (760) 360-9347

### ***Water savings flagging***

Perhaps not unexpected after relaxed water restrictions went into effect in June, across the state and in the Coachella Valley people are turning the spigots back on.

Coachella Valley Water District used 15 percent less water this August than in the same month in 2013 (the state’s baseline year to measure conservation results). But customers used 28.6 percent less in July.

Figures are similar for Desert Water Agency that reported an 18.5 percent conservation rate in August, a drop from 22 percent in July.

The state is divided into 10 hydrologic zones. In each of them, residents used more water per person per day in August that they did during the same month in 2015, says a story in the Los Angeles Times. Southern Californians, on average, used about 104 gallons per person per day, about 10 gallons more than they had in 2015. That’s the fourth-lowest rate among the 10 zones.

## A Special Thank You to Our Sponsors



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## Want to Get More Involved?

*We have so many opportunities for members to become more actively involved with the Desert Horticultural Society of Coachella Valley. Jump in!*

## Send Us Your Photos & Favorite Websites!

We like to show off photos of gardens or plants that horticulture society members have collected. Please send your jpeg photos at full size attached to an email with your name, where the photo was taken and information about the photo subject.

And, have you come across online gardens, educational sources or conservation links you like? Email links and photos to Jamie Lee Pricer at [jlp6@hotmail.com](mailto:jlp6@hotmail.com). We'll share them in future newsletters.