

The Chuparosa

Chapter Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 2 - February 2016



Sunnylands removes turf in favor of desert landscaping



The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands is removing the three acres of turf that line Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra drives outside the estate's signature pink wall and planting desert landscaping.

The project is expected to reduce annual water use on the mile-long, L-shaped parcel of land by 85 percent, said Sunnylands Director of Operations Pat Truchan.

"We will be going to a sparse desert landscaping, but the landscape ar-

chitect has designed it with a lot of interesting gravel and rock to add character and texture – different colors, sizes, and shapes. It's going to be a very nice addition to the Bob Hope Drive experience," Truchan said.

The distinctive pink wall and adjoining parkway have been the most visible portions of the midcentury modern estate that Walter and Leonore Annenberg completed in March 1966.

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Our Next Meeting: April 20 at 6 p.m.

Jessyca Frederick, an expert on water conservation in the landscape, will talk about common outdoor practices in Coachella Valley that lead to water waste, over-irrigation and why it all really matters here when there's so much water in our aquifer. She and her company, Water Wise Now, work to change the way our communities, residents and businesses think about applying water to our lawns and gardens.

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.

6 p.m. Regular DHSCV meeting with presentation by Jessyca Frederick

7:30 p.m. Refreshments

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

Borrow Books from the DHSCV Lending Library

Glenn Huntington generously donated much of his extraordinary library of books about plants, gardening, and sustainable living to the DHSCV. Borrow books and expand your knowledge. See Tom Edwards at our meeting.

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.

Feb. 13 Propagation of Desert Plants:

Hands-on workshop. Living Desert, 47-900 Portola Ave., Palm Desert. 9 a.m.-noon, \$25, \$35. Livingdesert.org, (760) 346-5694, Ext. 2501

Feb. 13, 14 Camellia Show and Sale:

San Marino, Huntington Botanical Gardens. (626) 405-2100, Huntington.org

Feb. 24 Wildflower Workshop:

9:30-11:30 a.m. Learn how to identify wildflowers, where to find them. Hand lenses, identification guides provided. Free. Visitor Center Patio, Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, 51-500 Highway 74, Palm Desert. RSVP at (760) 862-9984.

March 5 Coachella Valley Wildflower Festival:

Vendors, exhibits, artists, hikes, live animals, music, wine & beer garden, 5K trail run, mountain bike events. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Free entry. Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitor Center, 51-500 Highway 74, Palm Desert. Parking at St. Margaret's Church north of visitor center

with free shuttles to festival. desert-mountains.org, (760) 568-9918

March 5 Spring Awakening:

Flower show and annual spring garden festival in Inland Empire by Palms to Pines District of California Garden Clubs. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Lawrence Hutton Community Center, 660 Colton Ave., Colton. Free. (961) 663-5237

March 9 Desert Gardening Workshop:

With UC Master Gardeners. 9 a.m.-2 p.m., The Living Desert, 47-900 Portola Ave., Palm Desert. \$25, \$35. Livingdesert.org, (760) 346-5694, Ext. 2501

March 10 Climate-Driven Diversity Decline in California:

Lecture by Dr. Susan Harrison of UC Davis.

Upcoming events, cont'd

UCR Palm Desert auditorium, 6-7:30 p.m. 75-080 Frank Sinatra Drive, Palm Desert

March 11 Desert Landscaping Workshop: Desert climate landscaping, container gardening, plants that grow well in Coachella Valley, poisonous plants that may become a gardening issue, guided tour of the Living Desert plants. By Desert Area chapter of the UCCE Master Gardener Program of Riverside County. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. \$25 Living Desert members, \$35 nonmembers. <http://www.livingdesert.org/education/adult-programs/university/>

March 17 Plants of The Living Desert: 1-4 p.m. The Living Desert, 47-900 Portola Ave., Palm Desert. \$20, \$30. Livingdesert.org, (760) 346-5694, Ext. 2501

March 19 Anatomy of A Desert Garden: A 50 year history of one desert garden, includes breakfast, at Martin and Mary Brent Wehrli's garden in Palm Springs. 9 a.m.-noon. \$45, \$55. Livingdesert.org, (760) 346-5694, Ext. 2501

April 3 11th annual Desert Garden Tour: Starts at Wellness Park, Palm Springs. Noon.-4 p.m. Details TBA

April 12 "Earth Under Fire": How and why our climate is changing. Lecture at UC Riverside Palm Desert, 75-080 Frank Sinatra Drive. 7-8 p.m. Free. (951) 827-5089

April 20 DHSCV meeting: With presentation by Jessyca Frederick of Water Wise Now. 6 p.m. Hoover Room, The Living Desert, 47-900 Portola Ave., Palm Desert

April 26 "Change is the Only Constant": 10,000 years of climate variability in California and what it means to our water supply. Lecture at UC Riverside Palm Desert, 75-080 Frank Sinatra Drive. 7-8 p.m. Free. (951) 827-5089

Expanded Mod Week programming to include desert garden design



Photo by Destination Eichler: <http://www.destinationeichler.com/kid-friendly-palm-springs-vacation/>

Modernism Week, Feb. 11-21 in Palm Springs has added landscape and outdoor living to its slate of programs on midcentury design, architecture, art, fashion and culture.

Members of the Desert Horticultural

Society might be particularly interested in the presentation on Wednesday, Feb. 17 by landscape architect Steve Martino. Internationally recognized for his pioneering work with native plants and the development of a desert-derived aesthetic, he will

discuss designing responsible modern gardens using a few basic rules and design tools and explain how he uses architectural elements to structure space and control views.

In addition, Mountain States Wholesale Nursery, in partnership with Modernism Week, is supplying an array of desert architectural plants for a demonstration garden that will be on view from Feb. 11-21.

The presentation and the demonstration garden will be at CAMP, Modernism Week headquarters at 333 S. Palm Canyon Drive, in downtown Palm Springs. Information: <http://www.modernismweek.com/landscape/>

Field Trip Report: A day on the farm

By Jamie Lee Pricer

Some two dozen DHSCV members rose at dawn Jan. 28 for the 100-plus mile drive to Holtville for a day at the University of California's Desert Research and Extension Center. The 255-acre farm is one UC's nine research centers and at 104 years of age, the system's oldest.

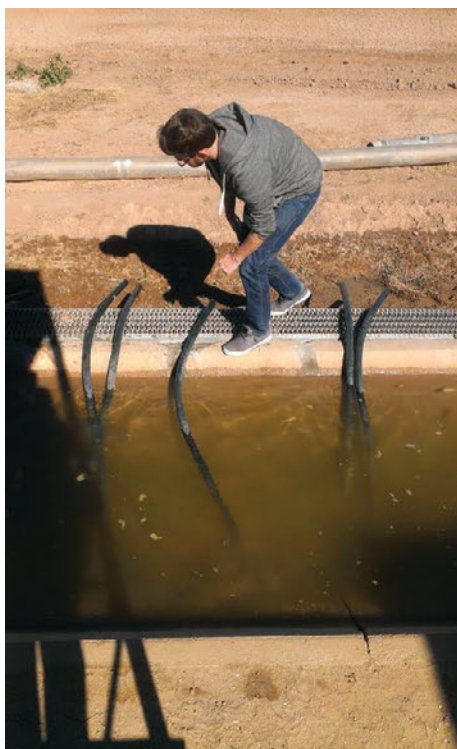


Volunteers greeted us with coffee and muffins, bottles of water and a large orange sack for harvesting vegetables. After the first of several talks about agriculture, we rode out to the fields on hay wagons—converted cotton gin trailers.

We passed a feed lot with about 600 head of Holstein cattle that come to the center at 150 pounds and leave about 300 days later at 1,400 pounds, thanks to feed that includes distillery byproducts, carrot pulp and high-protein almond hulls.

Each field we passed was a site of tests and/or experiments. For instance, what type of irrigation is the most efficient for alfalfa? One field was marked with various experiments on different colored carrots.

We were challenged to try old-fashioned siphon hose irrigation—a test for sure, tried by several and conquered by one.



Next, we were dropped off at signed fields where we harvested beets, radishes, daikon, cabbages, turnips, swiss chard and other greens in season to take home.



Lunch—fresh chef's salad with the center's noted onion dressing, sodas and cookies – was followed by a video and lecture on the Imperial Valley's 10 top crops.



The day closed by 3 p.m. with awarding more than a dozen door prizes and ice cream bars passed to us in plastic mugs carrying the center's insignia.

Will we have a show of wildflowers this year?



Dune primrose (white flower) and sand verbenas are two of the wildflowers you can expect to see this year in the Coachella Valley and surrounding desert areas.

Who better to answer the question that James Cornett, desert ecologist and author of "Coachella Valley Wildflowers."

In his Sunday Desert Sun column, he says he saw his first on Jan. 22 – a cluster of popcorn flowers.

After January storms dropped more than an inch of rain in the Valley, he was pretty sure we'd have a wildflower display.

"As soon as daytime highs reach 70 degrees or more for a few days expect to see blossoms," he wrote.

Here's a report from desertusa.com that tracks where to see wildflowers.

Anza Borrego Desert State Park:
A few buds are visible

Antelope Valley California Poppy Preserve: Has young fiddleneck, lupine and poppies with promise for more.

Death Valley National Park:
Flowers already blooming.

Joshua Tree National Park: Could be a good year for flowers.

Mojave National Preserve: Kelso Dunes already has healthy growth of dune primrose due to flower shortly.

Editor Jamie Lee Pricer note: *By the amount of greenery popping up through the gravel in my Palm Springs front yard, I know from 25 years of experience that we'll probably have wildflowers this year.*

Water wise tip for February

Outdoor water conservation is one of the most significant methods of water conservation in the Coachella Valley, says the Coachella Valley Water District.

The district offers three tips to save more water outdoors this month:

Don't water plants and grass every day. Plants and grass don't need much water during the cool season. In fact, outdoor watering is prohibited (for CVWD customers) on Mondays and Thursdays until March 31.

Turn your sprinklers off when it rains. Keep them off for at least 48 hours after the rain has stopped. (This is a mandatory water-use restriction).

Consider purchasing a smart controller if you have grass. These devices self-adjust according to current weather data. These controllers can reduce outdoor water use by an average of 26 percent.

Insects 101: Monarch Butterfly

Photos & Text By Brian K. Rolf

Common name:

Monarch Butterfly

Scientific name: *Danaus plexippus*

Wingspan: 3.5" - 4.0"

Caterpillar Size: Up to 2.75"

Range/habitat: Throughout North America

Probably the best known butterfly in the U. S. is the Monarch. Their distinctive orange and black markings make them easy to spot. Monarch caterpillars can be identified by two sets of filaments located near the end of the abdomen and on the second segment of the caterpillar's thorax.

Monarchs seen in our desert in October and November are migrating to their overwintering areas along the California coast. Monarchs east of the Rocky Mountains migrate to Mexico.

Habitat loss and changing climate are taking their toll on this species. Milkweed is the exclusive food source and nurse plant for the Monarch caterpillar.



Would you like to see more Monarchs in your garden? Create a Monarch Way Station to provide resources necessary for Monarchs to produce successive generations and sustain their migration. Monarch Watch has created a waystation program for gardeners who would like to help provide nurse plants for Monarchs. They

list one in our area, at Raymond Cree Middle School. Visit their website at <http://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/>

Brian K. Rolf is owner of Seattle Bug Safari, a traveling bug zoo. broolf@seattlebugsfari.com, (425) 829-4869

Interested in Ruellia? Here are the best to plant in our desert

Editors' note: Readers and garden fans, please welcome landscape contractor Bryan Stone who has graciously volunteered to write occasionally for The Chuparosa.

By Bryan Stone

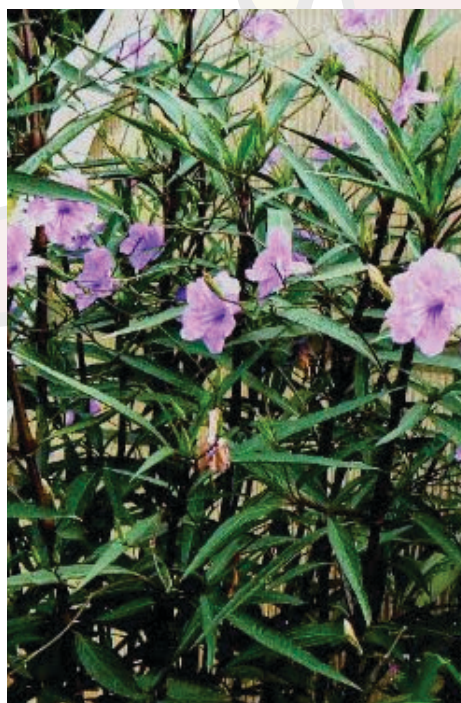
In the early 1500s, Jean Ruelle, French physician and botanist for Francis I, published a book on the habit, habitat, smell and taste of plants titled "De Natura Stipium."

I have yet to read the book, but I do work quite often with his namesake *Ruellia* species plants. You'll find them in gardens and parkways all around our desert.

There are three desert-friendly varieties. All have opposite leaves and bell-shaped, purple flowers with five shallow lobes, but these are the only similarities among the *Ruellia*. The key differentiator is the leaves, which range from as long as 4"-6" and lance-shaped to 1" ovals.

The varieties that do well here are *R. brittoniana*, *R. californica* and *R. peninsularis*. Most commonly used are *R. brittoniana*, *R. brittoniana* 'Katie' and *R. peninsularis*. You can find examples of *R. californica* at The Living Desert in the butterfly garden. Each of these species require different care and have different watering requirements.

Ruellia brittoniana



The most aggressive of the *Ruellia* species, it needs a moderate amount of water (over 1 gallon a day in summer). It spreads with underground runners anywhere it can locate water, so it is best to plant in a contained area (unless you want it to spread).

"Sunset Western Garden Book" describes this plant as growing to 3 feet but I have seen it grow as high as 5 (we have a lot more sun here than other places so plants often exceed their documented habit).

At College of the Desert a rectangular section of *R. brittoniana* north of the horticulture building requires

constant maintenance due to this natural spreading and growth habit. Every couple years it is wise to give it a good haircut — cutting almost to the ground in either early fall or early spring — if you want to give it a newly planted look within a month after pruning.

The 'Katie' is a slower growing dwarf of the *brittoniana* and usually looks its best if left alone. Do not plant in an uncontrolled high traffic area as the stems are brittle and pop off from the base. It has the same water requirements as the parent variety. Just remove any unwanted sections of the plant with a spade shovel. The look of this variety dwindles in reflected light and hot afternoon sun. Do not plant where rabbits feed regularly.

Ruellia californica



Ruellia, cont'd

Due to the popularity of *R. peninsularis*, *R. californica* can sometimes be difficult to find at nurseries. It is a good specimen variety, although the leaves can be sticky. Only a little bit of maintenance is required (see *peninsularis* below). At the end of winter remove any dead stems from frost. An occasional sprinkle of slow release fertilizer in fall and spring helps, as the leaves can sometimes go chlorotic (make sure the fertilizer has iron and, if you've got it, a dash of manganese).

Ruellia peninsularis



In the *Ruellia* genus, *R. californica* and *R. peninsularis* require the least amount of water and can survive without water for long periods of time. If given enough room, little

maintenance is required. Occasional trimming and removing old wood allows new growth to fill in.

Pruning is pretty simple once you perform it a couple of times. Cut unwanted growth down to around ½"-1" to the nearest dominant stem. Keep as much growth on the plant as you can during winter months.

Although this species is a low-water use plant, bare water needs allows only survival. To get the real beauty out of it, a little less than a gallon a day in the summer will give you an eye catcher (depending on its location). This variety can handle reflected heat and would be a good selection around pools or near sidewalks and parkways.

Prune with hand pruner, not with a hedge trimmer.

Selecting at a nursery

Whenever selecting plant stock from a nursery I always try to make sure the plants is housed there (and hopefully grown) in a similar environment to where I'll be planting it. Covered plants at the nursery want shade or filtered shade at home. Uncovered plants want full sun at home.

When selecting in winter months expect plants to have less foliage than

normal. The leaves of low-water use varieties tend to turn a little black.

Check planting depth on the low-water use varieties by rubbing your hand or finger near the base, remove some of the mulch and look for fibrous roots. The plant requires air circulation at the flare or base of the main stem. If you still see a straight stem with no sign of roots after an inch or two of removed mulch, take precaution as this can hinder growth and life of the plant.

For advice, look at the University of Arizona's article on "Plant selection and selecting your plants." It discusses the many things to consider:

<http://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1153.pdf>

Bryan Stone is a certified arborist and horticulturist. Born and raised in the Coachella Valley, he learned to respect the landscape and plant life at an early age from his parents and grandparents, helping care for the pines, eucalyptus, citrus and avocado trees on their ranch. As a licensed landscape contractor, Bryan also works with other professionals in the valley on projects like consultation, installation, tree pruning, irrigation and yearly plant maintenance.

Desert plants may need frost protection; winter chores include pruning

By Troy Bankord

Timing is everything. And being a desert gardener isn't easy, with our temperatures potentially dipping below freezing in the winter and then skyrocketing into the triple digits—sometimes up to 125 degrees—in the summer. So given these extremes, gardeners in the low desert must always be thinking months ahead.

Frost protection

Although we are not often prone to freezing temperatures in February, there are colder “pockets” and microclimates in the Coachella Valley where frost protection may be necessary.

Monitor your weather forecasts and check online for nights that will drop to 36 degrees or less. If you reside in a cooler area of the valley and a low of 36 degrees is forecast, some of you may be in for temperatures that hover around 30 degrees.

So, you'll want to provide frost protection for some succulents, cacti and frost-tender plantings. Some succulents are sensitive at 36 degrees or less. Also remember that cold air settles in lower areas that may be susceptible to frost or freezing. Sunny areas of your home and garden will retain some warmth through the night. Areas on the north side of your home will not.

If freezing temperatures are predicted, cover the tips of columnar cacti with foam cups. At sunset, your frost-sensitive plantings such as succulents, certain aloe species, *Agave desmettiana*, *Agave attenuata*, *Sansevieria* spp, *Portulacaria* spp (elephant food), *Bougainvillea* spp, *Euphorbia* spp, lantana, certain citrus (lemon and lime) hibiscus, natal plum, roses and annual flowers and vegetables should be draped with frost cloth, burlap or old sheets and blankets (never plastic!).



Bougainvillea can be trimmed, thinned in February.

I've found that frost cloth tends to be the most effective. It retains the warmth from the soil, repels water and keeps the cold off your plantings. (Moisture can filter through burlap, sheets and blankets and cause plant and tip die back.) Frost cloth can be purchased at local garden centers and larger home retail outlets.

Extend the canopy over the entire plant or area, allowing it to hang to the ground. If possible, support the cloth on temporary framework so that it does not touch foliage. With our occasional winds, you may also need

to tie the frost cloth onto the plants or stabilize it in place with stones, bricks or stakes. The covering should be removed the following morning before temperatures reach 50 degrees.

Garden clean up

Beautiful, natural-looking desert gardens require effective pruning and much of this is based on timing. If plantings are cut back too late—into the late spring or even summer—their surge of spring growth can be missed.

February, when desert plantings are showing signs of life, is a great month for you and your plants to get a workout. Remove dead wood from your evergreen trees and plantings, but don't cut back frost damaged plantings until around mid-month.

Also, hardy plantings like creosote, sage, myrtle, olive and oleander should be cut back pronto, to ensure any spring and summer blooming. Cutting them back further than their desired size allows for softer growth that will cover the stubs made from heavy pruning.

Many desert plantings may meet the fate of gas trimmers or shears and if so, one will find twice as much growth at the perimeter of the plant, while the plant's interior may simply be dead wood. If you want to have a garden with a more 'natural' look, alleviating those “balls, cubes and

February maintenance, cont'd

gumdrops," should be on your agenda.

February is an effective time to get in there and thin out half the dense growth for a light, airier look. You'll want to cut the growth back to the center of the plant to avoid seeing any "cuts" you've made. New growth will now be encouraged within the center of the plant, now that the interior can "see the light!"



Rosemary does best with light, regular pruning.

Caution! Beware of cutting rosemary back too drastically—unless it is a young plant. Rosemary is simply one of those few plants that won't tolerate heavy pruning. The growth simply dies. Rosemary is best maintained with regular shearing or regular monthly pruning to constantly encourage new growth and to avoid having it suddenly take over a space that it simply is too large for.

Mexican bird of paradise (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*) can be cut back now. Because it blooms more prolifically on new growth versus old wood, it's best to cut it back to about 1-foot in height. With adequate water, it will easily reach a 6-foot height by summer's end.

If it is being used as a hedge or as a

screen, you may not want to cut it back that heavily. Cutting it back by half will give you a fuller look—along with a plethora of spring, summer and fall color—while allowing more height.

Let 'em drink

You'll want to turn your watering system on after cutting things back to give them a good drink and a good start. I've found that giving them a "shower"—washing down their leaves and branches—along with a good drink around the roots, helps promote new growth more quickly. In our dry climate, hosing bare wood down on occasion after heavy pruning helps "soften" the wood, thus allowing new growth to protrude through the hard bark more readily.

Salvia species—especially *Salvia greggii*—should be cut back as early as possible this month. It can be fertilized with a balanced or slow release fertilizer. Compost is good and even a shot of Miracle Gro will do wonders.

Waiting until temperatures are too warm often encourages desert grasses to be trimmed into 2-foot-high flat tops or gum drops. To avoid this look, most desert grasses should be cut back as early in February as possible. Don't be afraid to cut them down to an inch or two. If grasses are not cut back drastically in the late winter, care must be taken not to cut them back too drastically into the spring;

especially not midsummer.

Avoid cutting back purple fountain grass until the first of March, after any chance of lingering frost.

Citrus care

If you have citrus in your garden, you'll want to trim, thin, shape and remove any dead wood as early in February as possible to avoid stunting the surge of new spring growth and inhibiting upcoming blooming.

I've found that fertilizing citrus at holiday times is most effective for the production of fruit and healthy foliage. The four holidays are: Valentine's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day. Organic, balanced fertilizers can be applied evenly around the root zone. Fertilizers should be mixed with water or well watered-in after applying for effectiveness and to avoid root burning.

Troy Bankord of Troy Bankord Design in Palm Springs has been a landscape and interior designer for 30 years. His award-winning projects have been featured in publications, on architectural tours and on television shows. In Arizona, his firm was the forerunner in native desert plant species maintenance via natural and selective pruning practices. He was named, 'Master of the Southwest' by Phoenix Home & Garden Magazine in 2006, and is a graduate of Marquette University.

Protect your trees in drought

By Angela Fasano

California is in a historic drought. Many people believe that removing trees would be a beneficial reduction in water use. Others are reducing the water applied to their turf, but are not taking into account that the trees in that turf are very likely being irrigated on the same irrigation valve.

It is critical that we maintain our trees. Your trees provide an immense range of benefits. For example, they:

- Improve air and water quality
- Provide shade to landscapes and reduce water needs
- Keep your home cooler
- Slow storm water runoff
- Reduce soil erosion
- Add value to your home

Trees take years to mature. During drought they can experience irreversible damage if not cared for.

Below are some tips on how to save trees during drought:

Water mature trees deeply and slowly 1-2 times per month. Use a soaker hose out toward the edge of the tree canopy and beyond.

Young trees need to be irrigated more often until well established.

Create a watering basin and fill with water 2-4 times per week.

Do not prune trees during drought. Trees are already stressed from not receiving adequate water. Pruning stresses trees. Also, be sure when it is necessary to prune trees, do not top them, but do structural pruning and never remove more than 25% of the foliage.

Mulch! Mulch helps retain moisture in the soil, reducing how often you need to irrigate your trees. Be sure to apply mulch at least six inches away from trunk, two-three inches deep and all the way out to or past the canopy edge.

Please take care of our precious trees. Trees provide more benefits than turf and are much more costly and time prohibitive to replace.

Angela Fasano is a water management specialist at Coachella Valley Water District.

Editor's note: For more precise directions about the best way to water trees under drought: <http://Switch-2Drip.com/TreeGuide>

What to do in your garden through February

February usually sees a bit of warming. So for gardeners that means a slate of chores. Here are some to consider:

- Water annuals and perennials diligently.
- Control winter weeds.
- Finish pruning roses and deciduous fruit trees.
- Plant shallow-rooted ground covers, native plants and other low-water use plants.
- Delay planting frost-tender plants such as citrus and bougainvillea until March, due to potential for late frosts.
- Continue to plant winter vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and lettuce.
- Check plants for aphids or other pests and control as soon as you see them.
- Begin deep root watering of trees in anticipation of spring growth.

For more ideas about what to do in your garden in February, see an article on garden maintenance written by Troy Bankord elsewhere in this issue.

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

State resets goals for water conservation

The desert's hot climate was considered Feb. 2 when the State Water Resources Control Board decided to adjust conservation goals for some of the state's water districts.

That means Coachella Valley Water District and Desert Water Agency will need to cut water use by 32%, a four-point drop from 36%. All other desert water suppliers also face a dip of four percentage points.

The new rules will be in effect Feb. 13 through October.

Your water saving could win a prize

Are you committed to conserving water in 2016? Enter Desert Water Agency's contest to win a \$200 Lowe's gift card. Just like DWA on Facebook or follow DWA on Twitter and upload a picture of your water saving goal with the hashtag #H2OResolution. Deadline is Feb. 12.



Have garden questions? Ask the Master Gardeners

In person, on the phone or by email, the University of California Continuing Education Master Gardeners of Riverside County can answer your gardening questions. Here's a roundup of their ongoing activities.

Help Line

Master Gardener volunteers respond to gardening questions and problems by phone, email or in person. The phone, (760) 342-6437, is manned from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 Mondays. In addition, gardening questions can be sent any time to anrmgindio@ucanr.edu Walk-ins are also welcome at the UCCE office, 81-077 Indio Blvd., Indio.

Moorten Garden tours

Master Gardener volunteers conduct docent tours of Moorten Botanical Garden, 1701 S. Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, every

day except Wednesdays when the garden is closed. For current times: moortenbotanicalgarden.com, (760) 327-6555

Farmer's Market info booths

Master Gardener volunteers serve regularly at "Ask the Gardener" tables at farmer's markets around the Coachella Valley.

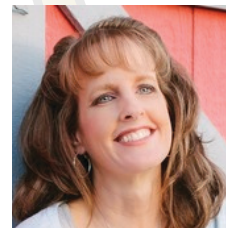
Palm Springs Farmer's Market: 8 a.m.-noon, Saturdays, Camelot Theatre parking lot, 2300 E. Baristo Road.

Palm Desert Farmer's Market: 8 a.m.-noon, second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, Chamber of Commerce parking lot, 72-559 Highway 111.

La Quinta Farmer's Market: 8 a.m.-noon, second and fourth Sundays of the month, Main Street, Old Town La Quinta.

Picture perfect

Lisha Astorga, Special Events Coordinator for DHSCV, passes along word of a blog she likes. From Arizona, it's called "Ramblings of a Desert Gardener." It has tons of plant info and photos, Astorga says. "I really like the way she presents the information on the plants and design ideas. <http://www.houzz.com/ideabooks/users/noellejohnson>



Sunnylands, cont'd

Initially, pink oleanders were planted around a chain link fence that encircled the property. Blight killed the oleanders in the early 1990s, prompting the Annenbergs to replace them with the pink wall and the parkway in 1995 in preparation for a visit from former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. "Prior to the wall being constructed, there was no grass on the outside. It was just sand," Truchan said.

Before opening to the public in 2012, Sunnylands invested more than \$7 million in water-conservation projects, including installing a state-of-the-art irrigation system and replacing 60 acres of turf with mulch and drought-tolerant plants.

In response to Gov. Jerry Brown's call to conserve water during California's historic drought, Sunnylands has not overseeded 96 acres of turf with a water-thirsty rye grass that keeps the landscape green in winter. Now, only 10 acres of the property, primarily around the Annenbergs' historic home, is overseeded.

Normally, the three acres of parkway outside the pink wall would be overseeded, too. Instead, the relandscaping project will replace grass with beds of decorative rock and clusters of plants – from fence post cactus to silver spurge and sharkskin agave – that will consume much less water than the turf.

Designs call for an existing stand of 31 olive trees that dot the parkway along Bob Hope Drive to be relocated toward the street's intersection with Frank Sinatra Drive. A small patch of grass will remain outside Sunnylands' historic entrance off Frank Sinatra Drive.

Relandscaping for the project was designed by Willet Moss of CMG Landscape Architecture, the same firm that researched the history of landscape architecture at Sunnylands and produced the landscape plan for Sunnylands' upcoming construction of an Archives and Administration campus.

Golf folks work to cut footprint for industry water

The valley's golf industry is "redoubling its efforts to reduce the desert golf industry's water footprint by a factor of 17 percent," according to Jim Schmid, golf superintendent at The Lakes Country Club and a member of the Coachella Valley Golf and Water Task Force. He was writing in a Valley Voice printed Feb. 1 in The Desert Sun.

He points out that "there is no way for the region's water agencies to restore the aquifer to a state of equilibrium without an 'impactful' contribution" from the local golf industry that, with its 122 courses in the valley, represents 14% of California golf stock.

What is the industry doing? Schmid summarizes: "They established a scientifically grounded budget allocation model, created the region's first turf rebate program, stimulated new desert-centric conservation programs, assisted in converting many more golf properties to non-potable sources, conducted myriad educational conferences designed to raise awareness and, in the process, laid a foundation upon which an expanded group of golf courses, disciplines and industry representatives can now ramp up efforts to bring the valley golf industry into full alignment with the Coachella Valley Water Management Plan."

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