

Construction continues on the Harvard Avenue Trunk Sewer pipeline project, located near the Harvard/Main intersection. By expanding this existing sewer line, IRWD will collect and transfer the wastewater to the nearby IRWD Michelson Water Reclamation Plant for treatment and recycled water production. Recycled water is used for landscape irrigation on golf courses, parks, school grounds, green belts and street medians. The project is scheduled to be completed in Summer 2008.



IRWD's Foothill Weather Station is back up and delivering signals to weather-based irrigation controllers. The station, one of three, was lost in the October/November Santiago wildfires. The signals from the station are key to IRWD's allocation billing system and while the station was inoperable, IRWD was able to use another station courtesy of Hydromap Data Systems.

Second Annual California Friendly Garden Contest Deadline April 3

Do you have native plants in your garden that use very little water? Is your garden beautiful and colorful?

Then chances are your garden could be a candidate for the Roger's Garden California Friendly Garden Contest, co-sponsored for the second year by Irvine Ranch Water District.

The contest launched last month and the deadline to enter is April 3. Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony on May 16. The grand prize winner will receive \$2,500, a certificate and a garden plaque. A new category has been added this year – Best Native Plant Garden.

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IRWD recently participated in a Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) workshop for 52 student teachers at the California State University, Fullerton El Toro campus. IRWD's Cheryl Woolard demonstrates the importance of Orange County groundwater. The next Project WET workshop is scheduled November 15 at the historic Duck Club in the San Joaquin Marsh. For further information call (949) 453-5500.

Restaurant Retrofit Package Program



Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) and AccuTemp Products

recently launched a new initiative that allows food service operators to trade in old, inefficient steamers and rinse sprayers for newer water-saving units.

The program is limited to the first 50 qualifying food service establishments. Under the program, a flat fee of \$750 per unit is charged, plus the cost of installation and old equipment removal. The food service operator receives a connectionless steamer for the kitchen, plus a 1.2-gallon-per-minute pre-rinse spray.

The retail price for this new equipment ranges from \$6,000-\$8,000, not including installation. Food service providers can realize a water savings of approximately 80,000 gallons per year and energy savings of around 75 kilowatt hours per day. Participating operators will also see lower sewer bills. IRWD received an enhanced conservation grant from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), which made this new program possible.

Information about the Restaurant Retrofit Package Program is available by contacting Tim Schaadt, IRWD conservation analyst, at (949) 453-5542.



A connectionless steamer

Suggested Weekly Watering Schedule

Weekly Watering Schedule for
SPRAY HEAD IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

MARCH

Turf grass:

1-3 days, 1-2 cycles* of 2-3 minutes each

Trees, shrubs, groundcover:

2 days, 2 cycles* of 3 minutes

Percent option: 50%**

APRIL

Turf grass:

2-3 days, 1-3 cycles* of 2-4 minutes each

Trees, shrubs, groundcover:

2 days, 2 cycles* of 4 minutes

Percent option: 70%**

*By "cycling" your irrigation timer to turn on for the suggested number of minutes an hour apart, you reduce runoff and gain deeper watering and healthier root growth. Start with this weekly schedule and increase the times only if your plants show signs of stress. If stress occurs only in isolated areas, check your irrigation system before increasing the time.

**Some irrigation controllers have a feature by which the watering time can be set by changing the percentage instead of specifically entering the days, cycles and minutes. If you don't have the instructions for your controller, check the manufacturer's website. Many controller manufacturers provide online access to the owner's manual.

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Second Annual California Friendly Garden Contest Launches

The contest categories are:

- **Best Aesthetics** - includes curb appeal, color, form, texture and plant health.
- **Best Use of Plants** - includes plants appropriate for Orange County's Mediterranean climate, appropriate plant combinations, innovative plants and creative use of plants.
- **Best Water Efficiency** - includes well-designed irrigation systems, minimum water runoff and water conservation.
- **Best Native Plant Garden** - emphasizes California's native plants.
- **Do-it-Yourself** - includes gardens designed, installed and maintained primarily by the homeowner with less than 20 percent professional assistance.

Winners in each of the categories will receive \$500 and a certificate. Criteria for each entry is:

- Residential properties only.
- Must be located within the boundaries of

Orange County.

- The garden must be at least one month old.
- No employees or family members of Roger's Gardens or the sponsors.
- Front yard landscape only.

All entries must demonstrate a beautiful garden, California-friendly plants, irrigation efficiency, zero runoff, good maintenance, reduction of green waste and organic principles.

Smart and sustainable landscaping is the most visible feature of the California Friendly home, with outdoor spaces designed in harmony with the surrounding environment using beautiful and less-than-thirsty plants, state-of-the-art irrigation controllers and precision sprinkler heads.

If you think your garden fits this criteria and you would like to enter the contest, log on to www.rogersgardens.com/gardencontest for information and an application.



Mulching is the use of a ground covering as a blanket around trees, shrubs and flowers. Most mulching materials are organic compositions, such as wood and bark chips, pecan shells, shredded leaves and grass clippings. Mulch is applied to a depth of two to four inches, depending on its material. Organic mulch should be kept a few inches away from the stems or trunks of plants and several inches away from the house foundation or siding. Here are the benefits to using mulch:

Mulch protects the soil

When your sprinklers apply water to bare soil, the water may wash away, slowly taking top soil with it. Heavy soils, such as our local clay, can quickly become compacted and crusty when watered repeatedly by sprinklers. Then, neither air nor water can enter the soil and get down to the roots of plants.



When mulch is used as a protective blanket on bare soil, water from the sprinklers trickles through the mulch and slowly seeps into the soil, rather than washing away. The soil stays loose, and the soil surface does not get crusty or compacted. This allows both water and air to penetrate more efficiently and deeply to the plants' roots.



Mulch helps prevent water loss from the soil surface



Under a hot sun, bare soil gets very warm. A lot of water evaporates from the soil's surface, which means a lot more watering will be needed to keep the soil moist and prevent stress to plants.

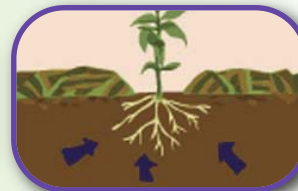


Mulch shades the soil, keeping it cooler. Less water evaporates from the soil surface.

Mulch prevents weeds from growing

Weeds can sprout and grow on bare soil. That means a lot of weeding is needed.

Mulch shades out weeds, which compete with shrubs and flowers for nutrients, water and light. Plus, the few weeds that do grow are easy to pull out.



Mulch improves the soil

Over time, organic mulch materials decay, adding nutrients and humus to the soil.



Irvine Ranch Water District will be closed for the following holidays:

- Friday, March 21, 2008 (Good Friday)

SHADETREE PARTNERSHIP EVENTS

- **Community service hours are available** for all volunteer tree planting activities. For more information call (949) 453-5670 or visit their Web site at www.shadetreepartnership.org. **Online registration available!**

SEA AND SAGE AUDUBON EVENTS

- **Sea and Sage Brunch (Saturday, April 12 and May 10; and Sunday, April 27, May 25 & June 15)**
The public is invited to a gourmet outdoor brunch and leisurely stroll through the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. The brunch starts at 10 a.m. and ends at noon. This program is for adults only and requires a \$20 per person pre-paid reservation. A 48-hour cancellation notice is required for refund. Call Helen Nicholas at (949) 726-0858 if you have questions. For registration information visit their Web site at www.seaandsageaudubon.org.
- **Audubon Nature Walk: Greeting Spring at the Marsh on Sunday, April 20 at 9 a.m.** - Audubon naturalist will lead an easy two-hour walk, designed for all ages, at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine. Limited space is available for this free event. To make reservations call Audubon House at (949) 261-7963.
- **Bat Walks** - Sea and Sage Audubon Society invites you and your friends to experience a BAT WALK at night in the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine. The bat walks are scheduled on Friday evenings May 16, June 20, and August 22, and Thursday evenings May 22 and August 7. Two adults-only walks are scheduled for Thursday evenings June 5 and August 28. All walks will begin at 7 p.m. (may vary according to time of sunset) and end at 9 p.m. Cost is \$12 per adult and \$6 for children seven (minimum age) to 12. Call (949) 726-0858 for questions or visit their Web site at www.seaandsageaudubon.org.
- **Become a member** of the National Audubon Society and the Sea and Sage Audubon Chapter. For more information visit their Web site at www.seaandsageaudubon.org or call the Audubon House at (949) 261-7963.

FAMILIES FORWARD

- There are a growing number of families facing financial difficulties in south Orange County. Families Forward exists to help families in need achieve and maintain self-sufficiency through housing, counseling, education and other support services. Bring donations to Families Forward, 9221 Irvine Blvd. in Irvine, Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. or Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- **Volunteers needed** - to help work in the food warehouse and in the office. There is a great need for Spanish & Farsi speaking volunteers.
- **For more information** - call (949) 552-2727 or visit www.families-forward.org.

ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF IRVINE

- **Assistance League of Irvine Thrift and Gift Shop** - 17801 Main Street, Suite H (Sky Park South), Irvine, (949) 955-3437. Donations welcome during normal business hours: Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Donate your old cell phone** - donate your old cell phone to Assistance League's Thrift Shop (see address and hours above).
- **To learn more about Assistance League** and membership call (949) 725-9188 or visit their Web site at www.irvine.assistanceleague.org. Assistance League of Irvine is a nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to providing programs and services that will enrich and improve the quality of life in Irvine.

FREE TAX PREPARATION

- Irvine residents and workers with a maximum annual income of \$50,000 can visit the Orange County One Stop Center located at 125 Technology Drive West, Suite 200, Irvine to have their tax return prepared for free. Offered through April 15, 2008, the site will offer free tax preparation Monday through Thursday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday tax day events are planned for April 12 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please call (888) 4EITC-4U to schedule an appointment and learn about eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). For more information on preparing your taxes free of charge go to www.icanefile.org.

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK OF ORANGE COUNTY

- The new facility at the former El Toro Marine Base is now open. The facility is located at 8014 Marine Way, Irvine, CA 92618. You can help by donating money or stock, sponsoring a special event, hosting a food drive or volunteering. For more information, please call Second Harvest at (949) 653-2900 or visit www.feedoc.org.

MASTER GARDENERS OF ORANGE COUNTY

- The University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Orange County, are a dedicated group of trained volunteers that provide assistance and share information about gardening in and around the Orange County area. For more information call their hotline at (714) 708-1646, visit their Web site at www.uccemg.com or send an e-mail to ucmastergardeners@yahoo.com.

The mission of Irvine Ranch Water District, a public agency, is to provide reliable, high quality water and sewer service in an efficient, cost effective manner and environmentally sensitive way that provides a high level of customer satisfaction.

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Pipelines

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**24 Hour Service
(949) 453-5300**

Should you discover a disruption in your water service or other problems call the IRWD 24-hour emergency line and a representative will assist you.

Visit the IRWD

Web site:

www.irwd.com

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Saturday, April 19
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
One Day One Campus Many Options
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