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# pipelines

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Irvine Ranch  
WATER DISTRICT



SEE IT FROM YOUR  
**LAWN'S**  
PERSPECTIVE.



## The Days Are Shorter, So Water Less

As the days get shorter, your landscaping needs less water. By September, plants naturally enter their dormant phase until spring. The shorter days also mean less water is lost through evaporation, regardless of daytime temperatures. So dial back your sprinklers by 30 percent. You'll still have a beautiful yard and save a boatload of water to boot. For a free watering guide and more, please visit [wateringguide.com](http://wateringguide.com).

## Take a Holiday from Gunked Up Pipes

The holidays are stressful enough, right? Don't create headaches by clogging your drains or gunking up the sewer system. De-gunking drives up maintenance expenses, costing water customers money that's better saved for holiday gifts.

Stay in the holiday spirit all year long by following these tips from IRWD collection systems manager Dorien McElroy:

- **Keep grease out of drains.**

Avoid holiday meal headaches by not pouring cooking grease down the drain. Grease from holiday turkeys, roasts and hams is a leading cause of sewage spills this time of year. Put leftover



grease in containers with lids, such as jars, then throw them in the garbage. When cleaning a greasy pan, pour grease into a container, wipe excess grease from the pan with paper towels, and throw the towels away.

- **Put eggshells in the trash.** Eggshells are like calcium. Running them through the garbage disposal in your sink is like dumping sand or rocks in the sewer.

- **Don't flush flushables.** Despite the unfortunate name, "flushable" wipes are not flushable. Good old-fashioned toilet paper is made to disperse and disintegrate as it agitates in water. Flushables are not paper—they are made of plastic that can't decompose or break into bits. As a result, they get stuck in pipelines and pumping equipment, creating maintenance mayhem.

- **Throw away sanitary napkins.** Paper towels can clog toilet pipes and cause headaches for ratepayers. Same problem with tampons and applicators. Dispose of these items properly, in the garbage can.

- **Toss the floss.** Dental floss can clump in the pump. So keep your hygienist and your water worker happy by flossing every day—and then tossing the floss in the trash.

# Composting Basics

## Part 2: Methods and Harvesting



Buy composting bins like this at garden supply and home improvement stores. They range from 10 to 80 gallons. Some have dual bins and/or rotating drums.

The traditional method of composting involves making a pile of organic materials and letting it stand for a year.

For faster harvesting, first chop the materials into one-inch or smaller pieces to provide greater surface area for decomposition. (See last month's *Pipelines* for an overview of which "green" and "brown" organic materials work best.) If available, place coarse material at the bottom of the compost bin to promote air circulation. Next, build the pile by alternating green and brown materials as they become available. Then periodically turn and moisten the compost.

Compost is ready for harvesting when it has a pleasant, earthy aroma, a dark brown color and a crumbly texture. If a few chunks of woody material remain, screen them out and place them in the next batch.

Incorporating compost into soil is the most common way to use it. Spread two to four inches of compost and mix it into the soil to a depth of six inches. This improves the texture and water retention of Orange County soils, which tend to be mostly clay or sandy.

Want to learn more? Visit [uccemg.com](http://uccemg.com) and type "composting" in the search field.

### Reserve 2018 Meeting Rooms

IRWD will accept reservation applications for the Duck Club and Community Meeting Room starting in November. An announcement will be posted on the meeting room calendar page at [irwd.com/community/meeting-rooms](http://irwd.com/community/meeting-rooms).



**Q:** Juan, I'm considering changing up my landscape. Is this a good time? Do you have any recommendations for doing it in a safe, non-chemical way?

**A:** This is the perfect time, because it's planting season. Before planting, take notes and sketch out ideas: what parts of your lawn to remove, types of plants, storm water management, landscape care methods (pruning, pest control, fertilizing).

Choose a method for removing turf. One option is spraying with vinegar, soap and water to kill the grass, then removing it manually. It's labor-intensive but eco-friendly.

Consider California native plants. They will root in well now, before onset of spring and summer. They also will require minimal water once established. Turn rain into your first source of water by adding rain barrels to your downspouts to capture rainfall. Finally, inspect your irrigation system for leaks. Consider using a smart timer that waters appropriately for the weather and shuts off when it rains. You can also achieve this by adding a simple rain sensor to a standard controller. Many of these items will earn you rebates from the water district. Visit [rightscapenow.com/rebates](http://rightscapenow.com/rebates) for details.

To ask a question or to see past answers, visit [rightscapenow.com/landscape-resources/ask-juan](http://rightscapenow.com/landscape-resources/ask-juan).

### Used More Water During Fire?

IRWD takes a proactive approach to ensure a safe and reliable water supply, especially during an emergency. If you used additional water due to the Canyon 2 Fire, please contact IRWD Customer Service at 949-453-5300 for a bill adjustment.

### Save the Date

#### Time to Plant Workshop

Wednesday, Nov. 8  
6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

IRWD  
Multi-Purpose Room  
15600 Sand Canyon Ave.  
Irvine

Learn how to select appropriate plants and learn proper landscape cultural practices. Receive tips for planting and landscape care.

**Sign-ups required:**  
[rightscapenow.com/events](http://rightscapenow.com/events)

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