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JUNE 2020 | NUMBER 6



Irvine Ranch
WATER DISTRICT

Get The Dirt in Gardening Newsletter

Looking for garden inspiration? You can find it in *The Dirt*, IRWD's new electronic newsletter dedicated to promoting beautiful and water-efficient landscapes in our local Southern California climate.



This quarterly publication will provide helpful tips, resources, and ideas—everything you need to know to create a beautiful outdoor retreat with a plant and color palette that gives your yard interest and saves water too.

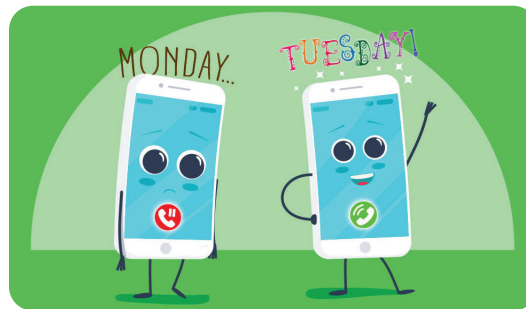
To read the spring issue and sign up to receive future copies in your email each season, visit RightScapeNow.com/The-Dirt.

Water Quality

IRWD meets all of the exacting quality standards set by the state and federal government. Visit IRWD.com/water-report to read or request a copy of the new annual Water Quality Report, released this month.

How We're Helping You Through This

IRWD remains committed to serving you as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic together. Here are highlights of how we're responding, and tips to help you manage your account.



Need to call? Avoid Monday.

IRWD offices remain closed to the public, but we're still here for you. Most transactions can be completed on IRWD.com, or by email at CustomerService@IRWD.com. Full-service agents are available 8 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday–Thursday. If you prefer to call, dial **949-453-5300**. We are experiencing high call volume—and long wait times—on Mondays. So we recommend you call on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. For quick links to 24/7 service, visit IRWD.com/services.



Water education and science fun.

IRWD and Discovery Cube have taken our kids' water-education program online, with free webinars and activities you and your children can do at home. Grade-specific content teaches the science of water and the value of efficiency. Open to all K–8 students in our district. Visit oc.discoverycube.org/irwd-portal. Email Info@IRWD.com to ask for a password.

Meeting rooms closed. IRWD community meeting rooms are closed until further notice and we are not accepting any new applications. Watch IRWD.com/services for updates, or email Info@IRWD.com.

Extra people at home? You can apply for a temporary COVID-19 variance to



increase your water budget. See IRWD.com/variance.

Returning to a closed building?

When a building or home has been closed for weeks, the stagnant water needs to be flushed. Simultaneously turn on all faucets for 10–15 minutes and flush all toilets. Run refrigerator water to refill the line, and dump 3–5 cycles of ice. Set the water heater to 140°F or higher. Learn more at IRWD.com and bit.ly/cdc-buildings.

No late fees or shutoffs. Having trouble paying your bill? Don't worry. Talk to Customer Service. IRWD will not charge late fees or disconnect service until further notice.

▶▶ YOUR SERVICE RESOURCE ◀◀

Need service? Want updates? Visit our Coronavirus Resource Page at IRWD.com/services.

Student Artwork Shows ‘Water is Life!’



Poster by Maxwell Ngo, grade 6

Five students from IRWD’s service area have won the Municipal Water District of Orange County Water Awareness Poster Contest. IRWD’s winners are **Ellie Heck**, grade 4, Canyon View Elementary; **Sailee Charlu**, grade 5, The Pegasus School; **Jane Park**, grade 5, Portola Springs Elementary; **Maxwell Ngo**, grade 6, Pioneer Middle School; and **Brian Son**, grade 8, Jeffrey Trail Middle School. Meanwhile, nine other IRWD-area students have been selected as finalists for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California poster contest.

Thanks to all of the students and teachers who participated! To see artwork by all of these winners and finalists, visit IRWD.com/water-art.

Ask Juan



Q: Juan, I’m considering starting a vegetable garden at home. Any ideas on what I could do? Would this increase my water use?

A: Starting a vegetable garden is a fabulous idea—a smart way to use your water. Vegetable gardens can be relaxing, providing good family time and yielding delicious fruits and vegetables. Three recommendations: Fertilize with organic

materials, use eco-friendly pest management, and practice good hygiene by keeping your gardening tools clean. For June, plant root vegetables like radishes, carrots and potatoes.

Crops need to be watered at specific times for proper development, but don’t use any more water than typical landscape. To be most water-efficient, use drip irrigation for your vegetable bed or fruit tree. Check out OC Master Gardeners for online resources at mgorange.ucanr.edu. Various California native plants are edible, such as Huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*).



Got landscape questions? Email AskJuan@IRWD.com or ask on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram with [#irwdcommunity](https://www.facebook.com/irwdcommunity). See past answers at RightScopeNow.com/landscape-resources/ask-juan.

California Native Corner Juan’s June Plant: California Aster

California aster (*Symphotrichum chilense*) is a beautiful perennial that bears a ton of summer flowers. It can survive in full sun to partial shade, and attracts pollinators such as native butterflies and moths. It can be found in coastal areas, with flowers ranging from blue to lavender to yellow. Make sure to prune the plant low after it flowers in the fall—it will reappear in late winter. — Juan



Congrats, Fix a Leak Contest Winners



Household leaks waste nearly a trillion gallons of water a year nationwide. So we challenged customers to find and fix leaks inside and outside their homes during this year’s Fix a Leak Week. More than 70 customers acted and participated in our annual Fix a Leak Week contest. Congratulations to the following participants who fixed leaks and then were selected in a random drawing to receive Home Depot gift cards.

Grand Prize Winner:
Sopi Vong

Prize Winners:
Jerri Campbell, Jony Kan, Ted Lee, Susy Nishimura, John Swanson, and James Won

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