

the dirt



SPRING 2024 GARDENING NEWSLETTER



Your style, their guidelines.

HOA-friendly tips and ideas to add flair to your landscape.

Your front yard is an important first impression of your style and personality. If you're thinking of giving your yard a spruce-up, and you live in a homeowners association, here are some tips to help you work with your HOA to move your landscape from ordinary to dazzling.

Tip 1: Ask for your HOA's approved plant list and guidelines on design and landscaping. The more you draw from this, the easier the approval process will be.

Tip 2: Get information about the approval process so you can plan for a seamless transition. Ask for examples of other homes in your community that completed the process.

Tip 3: Visit [IRWD.com/landscape](https://www.irwd.com/landscape) for online tools you can use to design something beautiful that blends with the architecture of your home, character of your community, and HOA guidelines.



Olive trees, Italian cypress, bougainvillea and Japanese boxwood give this home a Mediterranean feel.

By law, an HOA cannot prohibit low-water plants in a landscape but it can establish design guidelines, approved plant lists, and the process required to get the work approved.

Remember that you and your HOA share the same goal: To achieve a beautiful landscape with great curb appeal. Communication and collaboration are key to making that happen, with beautiful results.

Plant like a local.

Even a few native plants can turn your yard into a natural beauty.



Irina Ensminger | California Native Plant Society, OC Chapter

Irina Ensminger is a board member for the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society. She drew from her love for the environment and training as an interior designer to create her own native plant garden—one of many featured in the chapter's upcoming garden tour.

Your garden is stunning. Did you do it yourself?

Ensminger: Yes! I did the research, design and preparation, and it became a family project. My son helped me carry rocks to create a dry creek, and my daughter helped me to spread mulch around. My husband had his doubts at first, but he loves the garden now.

How do native gardens help the environment?

Ensminger: California is the most biodiverse state in the nation. About one-third of the plants that grow here naturally don't grow anywhere else in the world. Native gardens are beautiful, save water, and provide habitat for pollinators and wildlife. The native plants in my garden attract butterflies, bees and lizards, and I love watching the birds sitting on the buckwheat. Even a small native garden can help wildlife and pollinators.



Blackfoot daisy, Montara sagebrush and California poppies enliven Ensminger's landscape.

What resources did you use to plan your garden?

Ensminger: The California Native Plant Society offers a searchable plant guide at calscape.org. Our local chapter, at chapters.cnps.org/oc, has several resources, too. Tree of Life Nursery, dedicated to native plants, was extremely helpful to me.

California in My Garden Tour: CNPS' OC chapter is hosting a self-guided tour of more than 20 gardens on May 4 and 5. Registration is limited. Go to chapters.cnps.org/oc to learn more.

Fix your sprinklers.

IRWD program will pay half the cost of professional repairs.

Has your sprinkler system seen better days? Do you need a line repaired, a valve replaced? Sprinklers raised or adjusted? We can help!

IRWD's Sprinkler Repair Program provides expert assistance and covers half the cost of qualified repairs—saving you time, water and money. We'll also split the cost of quality components including high-efficiency nozzles, drip irrigation and more. That includes installation of a smart irrigation timer and programming.

With this kind of help, why wait? Both residential and commercial customers can apply.

Landscape irrigation makes up about 40% of the water used in California homes, according to the California Department of Water Resources. An outdoor irrigation leak can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

To qualify for the program, you must be an IRWD customer with no delinquencies on your water bills in the past 12 months. The program is limited to functional in-ground irrigation systems already in place. A landscape evaluation fee of \$137.50 is required.

Apply today at [IRWD.com/sprinklerrepair](https://www.irwd.com/sprinklerrepair).



Program services include:

- Irrigation reprogramming
- Smart timer installation
- PVC valve repairs/replacement
- Sprinkler head and body adjustments/replacement
- Lateral PVC pipe repair
- Drip irrigation flush/replacement



Juan's tip of the season.

Plant for spring.

If you missed the fall planting season, there is no need to worry. Spring is still an excellent time to get plants into the ground before the heat of summer. Choose from the many California native and non-native climate-appropriate plants available at your local nursery. It's all about selecting the right plant for your landscape. Consider creating a pollinator garden that will attract native bees and butterflies, as well as birds and other wildlife. A small patch of native habitat is a benefit to your home and environment.



Looking ahead.

Your garden to-do list.

- **Clean:** Remove weeds organically by hand or with boiling water. Type UCIPM into your browser for other tips from the University of California's Integrated Pest Management Program.
- **Mulch:** Apply an inch of compost around plants, then cover with 3 to 4 inches of mulch, especially around newly planted trees and shrubs. Keep mulch away from trunks and plant stems.
- **Fertilize:** Spring is a perfect time to fertilize your landscape. Consider using organic fertilizers. Not only will they help your plants, they are eco-friendly, too.

50% off bulk mulch purchases!

Mulch is a key component to a healthy garden soil and greater water savings! Right now, IRWD customers can get 50% off bulk mulch purchases through our Mulch Madness

program. Go to [IRWD.com/mulchmadness](https://www.irwd.com/mulchmadness) for more information, or to apply.



Tap our online resources.

Visit [IRWD.com/rebates](https://www.irwd.com/rebates) for rebates to help offset the cost of turf removal, weather-based irrigation controllers, efficient sprinkler heads, drip kits and more. Plus, check out our plant database at [IRWD.com/plantlist](https://www.irwd.com/plantlist).

Need to contact IRWD?

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