

Going Native- *Ditching Your Water-Guzzling Lawn* – By Diane de Lara, Library

A lush, green lawn has long been part of the American home-owning dream. But with our long-term drought and lawns either turning brown or using up greedy amounts of water, now's the time to look at eco-friendly alternatives.



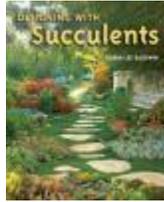
Did you know:

- The average American family uses 48 gallons a day watering lawns and gardens. Nationwide, landscape irrigation consumes nearly [9 billion gallons](#) per day!
- As much as 50% of outdoor water use is wasted through evaporation, wind, or runoff caused by inefficient watering systems.
- Older gas-powered lawn mowers, leaf blowers and other garden equipment (from before the 2012 EPA emission standards) can contribute significantly to local ground-level ozone/smog. Plus there's the annoying noise pollution!
- Pesticides and fertilizers used to make non-native grasses thrive can run off down storm drains and contaminate local waters.

What you can do:

- Replace your lawn with California native plants or low-water plants, such as succulents.
 - Get up to [\\$2000 in rebates for lawn replacement](#) from the California Department of Water Resources! NOTE: Do not start your project before receiving approval by email.
 - [Tips for removing a lawn](#) from the California Native Plant Society
 - Get inspired by this [Mill Valley lawn replacement](#) story, this [slideshow](#) of California native plants and gardens, or this comparison of three common groundcovers including a [no-mow fescue grass](#)
- If you really must keep your lawn...
 - Consider reducing the size of your lawn: Add borders with native plants, decorative rocks, succulents, etc. Or add a permeable path or patio (using pea gravel, crushed granite, or pavers/stones with loose gravel or greenery in between that allows water to drain through).
 - Upgrade your garden equipment and consider hand-powered or electric alternatives.

- Mulch your clippings. Leaving your clippings on the grass cuts down on the need for fertilizer and help lawn surfaces act as a [carbon sink](#).
- Upgrade and maintain your watering system. Newer systems can monitor weather conditions and customize your watering schedule, both of which will save water and money. See the [EPA's guide](#) to water-saving technologies.
- Check out the Marin Water Districts [water use calculator](#) to see other ways to save water outdoors and in the home.
- Visit the Falkirk Cultural Center's [Demonstration Garden](#) by the Marin Master Gardeners. It's filled with wonderful plants attuned to our climate and soil conditions. The Master Gardeners are also having a [Native Plant Sale](#) (9am-1pm) and a lecture on native plants (11am) on Saturday, October 24.
- Schedule a free Marin-Friendly Garden Walk with a [Master Gardener](#) and get water-wise tips for a beautiful, healthy landscape. Call 415-473-4204.
- Finally, visit your friendly library [shameless plug] and find books on replacing your lawn and/or water-saving landscaping such as these...



[Beautiful No-mow Yards](#) by Evelyn J. Hadden

[Designing with Succulents](#) by Debra Lee Baldwin

[Lawn Gone!](#) by Pam Penick

[Plants and Landscapes for Summer-dry Climates of the San Francisco Bay Region](#) edited by Nora Harlow

[Reimagining the California Lawn](#) by Carol Bornstein

Love,
Your Employee Green Team
www.cityofsanrafael.org/greenteam