

## “Fabulous Fall”– Are You Ready?

Cooler temperatures are just around the corner, reminding us that before long winter will be here. To help you get your landscape in shape for the best gardening season of the year, here are some simple tips from the Town of Gilbert Water Conservation office.

**Adjust Your Watering Schedules** - Deep, infrequent irrigations are always recommended when applying water to your landscape, but as temperatures cool the interval in-between applications will need to be increased. Dormant Bermuda lawns only need to be watered once a month in the winter. If you have chosen to plant a winter rye lawn, once it is established only apply water once a week. Check the irrigation schedule on the Town of Gilbert water conservation web page below.

**Check Your Irrigation System** - Emitters may become clogged and irrigation lines can develop leaks. Troubleshooting your system will enable you to replace clogged emitters, or add emitters to plants and trees that need more water as they grow. Lawn sprinklers should be checked to see that even coverage hasn't been affected by sand or debris in the sprinkler heads.

**Apply Mulches** - Organic mulches will improve your soil by adding nutrients and slowing moisture loss over your plants' root zone. They also keep tender roots warmer during the chilly winter months. Keep mulch away from trunks or main stems to avoid suffocation. Organic mulches can be covered with granite if you prefer.

**Weed Control** - Weeds can compete with other landscape plants for water and nutrients. Remove them by hand or apply safe weed sprays. Follow recommended package labels exactly.

**Fertilize Non-Native Plants** - A light application of fertilizer is always better than too much. Follow product label recommendations for non-native plants. Broadcast the product over the root zone (not next to the stem or trunk) and water deeply. Native plants usually do not require fertilizers and generally grow better without them.

**Pruning** – Frosty nights may damage tender foliage on plants like lantana and bougainvillea. Wait until new growth has emerged next spring before you prune away frost-damaged stems. Prune other plants only when necessary. Pruned plants require **more** water and fertilizer. Blooming is reduced or eliminated when plants are repeatedly shear pruned.

**Plant Replacement** - If plants have died or seem to be struggling, fall is the perfect time to replace them. This way they have the entire winter season to establish a strong root system before the heat of next summer arrives. Native or desert-adapted plants adjust easily to our soils and climate, and require less water and maintenance.

*If you are experiencing high water consumption, contact the Water Conservation office to schedule a free home water audit. 480-503-6098*

**Be sure to visit the Town of Gilbert Water Conservation web pages for landscaping tips, water wise plants, frequently asked questions and more. <http://www.ci.gilbert.az.us/water>**

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