

August 2024

waternews



Your source for all things water

Prep now to use WaterSaver Coupons later

Fall is the best time to plant. So how do you exercise your green thumb until then? Now's the perfect time to start prepping for that new splash of autumn garden color with a little sweltering help from the summer sun!

Solarization involves layering clear plastic over the grass to create a steaming greenhouse effect that will exhaust and kill the turf below it.

First, gather your supplies:

- Lawn paint or a hose to outline the project area.
- Solarizing tarp or a roll of transparent 4-6 mil plastic sheeting cut to the shape of the future landscape bed. (Don't use black or white plastic; they won't create enough heat.
- Bricks, rocks or lumber to weigh down the sheet.
- Lawnmower or string trimmer.
- Shovel.

Once you've outlined the bed area, scalp the turf grass all the way to the ground with a mower or string trimmer. When you're ready to apply the plastic, soak the area with water

first. This will help create the "greenhouse effect" that will cook any emerging shoots.

Now lay out the plastic as tight to the ground as possible, and carefully bury the edges to trap heat. Secure the sheet with bricks, rocks or lumber.

Once installed, it will take 6-8 weeks of full sun to kill the existing grass and reset your soil for planting. The advantage of this method is it doesn't require herbicides or much digging. But it does require a patient, dedicated gardener.

By the time the grass is dead, you'll be ready to use your SAWS WaterSaver Coupons to get those fall plantings in your new bed!

Through Oct. 15, SAWS residential customers can apply for up to four \$100 WaterSaver coupons at GardenStyleSA.com/coupons.

And visit GardenStyleSA.com/PlantByNumbers for free, ready-made landscape designs based on your specific landscape needs.



KNOW THE **NEW** WATERING HOURS

KNOW YOUR DAY

M	T	W	TH	F
0	2	4	6	8
1	3	5	7	9

LAST DIGIT OF ADDRESS

**5-10 AM &
9 PM-MIDNIGHT**

WateringRules.com



Join the MySAWS Conversation:



Event Calendar

Nature Preserve Nature Walk

Sept. 7

Bulverde Oaks Nature Preserve
17480 Judson Road
greensatx.org

Bonsai Weekend

Sept. 7-8

San Antonio Botanical Garden
555 Funston Place
sabot.org

Second Saturday Habitat Work Day

Sept. 14

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center
10750 Pleasanton Road
mitchelllake.audubon.org

Gardening Essentials

Sept. 16

San Antonio Garden Center
3310 N. New Braunfels Ave.
gardeningvolunteers.org

Saving Water with At-Home Composting

Sept. 26

Eco Centro
1802 N. Main Ave.
ecocentro.eventbrite.com

Birding for Beginners

Sept. 28

Government Canyon
State Natural Area
12861 Galm Road
tpwd.texas.gov/calendar

Customer Service and 24-hour Emergency

210-704-SAWS (7297)
saws.org/waternews

Hose-end sprinkler users: get a variance to water earlier

The new Stage 3 watering hours have left some SAWS customers concerned about dragging around their hose-end sprinklers in the dark.

That's because new watering times shifted to earlier in the morning and later in the evening. But hose-end sprinkler users can avoid having to water late at night by applying for a variance.

Apply online at saws.org/hose. You will need your SAWS account number to apply. If approved, the variance will allow you to water from 7-10 p.m. (instead of 9 p.m. to midnight) on your watering day.



The variance is only for residential customers who rely on above-ground hoses and attached sprinklers to water their landscape. Customers with an in-ground irrigation system — working or not — are not eligible. But you can request a free irrigation system consultation and earn a rebate to permanently remove it. Call 210-704-SAVE (7283) to schedule.

As a reminder, new Stage 3 watering hours for sprinkler users (in-ground and hose-end without a variance) are from 5-10 a.m. and 9 p.m. to midnight on your watering day. You can still water with a hand-held hose any time, any day.

Storm drains are only for rain

Rain may be a rare occurrence these days, but when it does happen the San Antonio River and local creeks are inundated with debris and contaminants.

That's because trash from streets and parking lots or chemicals from driveways and landscapes are washed down storm drains and right into the nearest body of water.

It's called runoff — and it's a major source of pollution to the San Antonio River watershed.

You can help prevent pollution and debris

from entering our storm drains:

- Toss trash in garbage bins.
- Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly (and avoid using if rain is in the forecast).
- Pick up and dispose of pet waste.
- Use drip pans to catch engine oil and other pollutants when repairing automobiles and recycle them.
- Compost or mulch leaves and yard trimmings instead of sweeping them into the street.
- Direct downspouts and rain gutters away from paved surfaces.



Embrace unintentional ground covers

Allowing diversity within your landscape is one way to reduce dependence on summer watering. That includes letting go of the idea of a traditional lawn when wild plants spring up.

Along with not requiring any water, these unintentional ground covers are true xeriscapes because they can withstand mowing and thrive in lawns.

A few common ones include:

- Gregg's honeysuckle
- Three-lobed false mallow

- Wild petunia
- Low menodora
- Horseherb
- Frog fruit



To the untrained eye, these unassuming alternatives are often considered lawn weeds because they out-compete grass. They step up and perform better than turfgrass, especially during drought. And that's exactly why they're the ideal complement — or replacement — to a traditional lawn.

Embrace them and you'll save a lot of water, and money too.