

# customer Pipeline



July • August 2014

## Sipping and conserving

Making it through the drought.

**E**BMUD customers have stepped up. As of mid-June, you are using 11 percent less water, on average, compared to last year's use, since drought cutbacks began in February.

How are you doing it? Customers are changing habits, changing out water-thirsty landscapes (or watering them less), changing out wasteful fixtures for more WaterSmart versions, and checking for leaks—those culprits that can waste 36 gallons or more per household per day. Plus you are notifying EBMUD of leaks out on the street, so we can follow up.

So far, so good! But with a hot, dry summer ahead, the challenge to conserve will be greater. Water use doubles or triples in July and August, so keep an eye on that outdoor water use. Adjust your watering schedule, watch for overspray and runoff and always look for that sneaky leak.

Are you meeting the 10 percent goal? Do you know how you are stacking up? Check your gallons per day this year/last year on your water bill. See [www.ebmud.com/customers/understanding-your-water-bill](http://www.ebmud.com/customers/understanding-your-water-bill).

We do not know when this drought will end. But we know the more you save today, the more prepared we'll be if next winter is as dry as the last.

### Not ready to lose the lawn? Water less.

Let your lawn tell you when to water! If your footprints do not remain visible on your lawn, you don't need to water it. In July and August your lawn may not look perfect but will do well with two days of watering per week. To make every drop count, water deeply and avoid runoff by applying 3 or more short irrigation cycles (4 am, 5 am, 6 am). In September, reduce to one day a week. Stop watering after the first storm this fall. It's best to mow at a height of 3 to 3-1/2 inches. Even better, make a statement about your commitment to conservation: let your lawn go brown. It will recover later with regular watering or rainfall.

## Sacramento River tapped

It was a first: After decades of planning for alternative dry year supplies, this spring, five billion gallons of Sacramento River water began to fill reservoirs in the East Bay. Reservoir levels were shrinking because of the lack of winter rain and snow.

The worst drought EBMUD experienced was in 1976-1977, when customers had to cutback 35 percent through mandatory rationing. Since then, EBMUD has invested more than a billion dollars to develop a variety of water supply alternatives. These investments lessen how much fresh, potable water is needed to supply East Bay businesses and residents. They include more conservation, water recycling and access to new supplies.

Thanks to cutbacks by customers and ratepayer investment in dry year water supplies, the East Bay is better prepared to make it through a sustained drought.



# The long lawn goodbye - Part II: Break up with your lawn

Sometimes you know it's time to say goodbye.

Picture your life after the breakup: a beautiful haven on a hot summer day; a garden with a small lawn for kids or pets, surrounded by plants that celebrate the seasons, including our dry summers. Perhaps the garden includes sculpture, or a small recirculating fountain. Maybe your dreamy garden has a bench for reading and sipping, or has plants that attract hummingbirds, or has a patio for enjoying al fresco meals with your family as well as the birds and the bees.

Let's get started. Summer is the perfect time to plan. Save the actual planting for the fall to coincide with seasonal rains.

- **Get to know your yard.**

Study your existing spaces. Consider views, topography, sunny spots, shady spots, and note existing plants or trees to save.

- **Define your boundaries.**

Consider how you will use the spaces freed up by some or all of the old lawn. Do you want a seating area? A hammock or bench? An area for the kids to play? How might you connect them?

- **Start fresh.** Start an idea book, pulling favorites from magazines or online sources, or even photos of yards you've noticed. Try a weekend garden tour to see great examples up close. Go to [www.ebmud.com](http://www.ebmud.com) to see some of our picks.



- **Pick your plants.** EBMUD's *Plants and Landscapes for Summer-Dry Climates* book is a great resource. With more than 500 photos, you're bound to find plants that inspire. Plants were selected by local experts for their beauty and resilience. When you design your garden, be sure to group plants with similar water needs together to make irrigation easier and more efficient.

- **Pick your hardscape.**

Patios, decks, paths and other hard spaces create a framework for your entire design. Consider your style (casual or formal, colorful or simple) and potential costs. Porous materials are preferred because they let water through to the soil below.



- **Finalize your design.** Refine your ideas. You can do this yourself or with the help of a landscape designer or landscape architect.

This approach to landscape design conserves water and energy, protects wildlands and requires less upkeep than traditional landscapes. The best part? Your new garden will be more beautiful and will be more resilient in a drought. *Happy Gardening.*

**Let EBMUD help.** Your lawn breakup can be eligible for a rebate of 50¢ a square foot and 25¢ more for drip irrigation. Mail in an application before your yard revamp. Go to: [www.ebmud.com/lawngoodbye](http://www.ebmud.com/lawngoodbye)

**Mulch it.** Once you're ready to let go of the lawn, sheet mulch to break down the grass. If you have a large area, ask local tree trimmers for a load of mulch. For smaller areas, get a discount on bags of mulch with these coupons. [www.ebmud.com/mulchme](http://www.ebmud.com/mulchme)

**Choose the right plants.** Do your research. Order *Plants and Landscapes for Summer-Dry Climates*. EBMUD customers get a \$10 discount! [www.ebmud.com/plantbook](http://www.ebmud.com/plantbook)



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#### EBMUD Mission Statement

To manage the natural resources with which the District is entrusted; to provide reliable, high-quality water and wastewater services at fair and reasonable rates for the people of the East Bay; and to preserve and protect the environment for future generations.