

customer Pipeline



July • August 2010

Reap the Rewards of Sustainable Landscaping

Lawn watering will reach its annual peak during the months of July and August. Long days and high temperatures increase the amount of water it takes to maintain a lawn and many common landscape plants that are not adapted to our summer-dry climate. Automatic sprinklers, even well designed and maintained systems, are only about 65 percent efficient - a good portion of the water from sprinklers will go where it can't be used by the plants.

Sustainable landscaping can solve this problem by using plants that are adapted to our Mediterranean climate, mulch to improve soil health, and drip irrigation if needed to help establish the plantings. If you think that this means prickly unattractive plants and rocks, take a look at EBMUD's book, *Plants and Landscapes for Summer-Dry Climates*, to see how beautiful and inviting sustainable gardens can be.

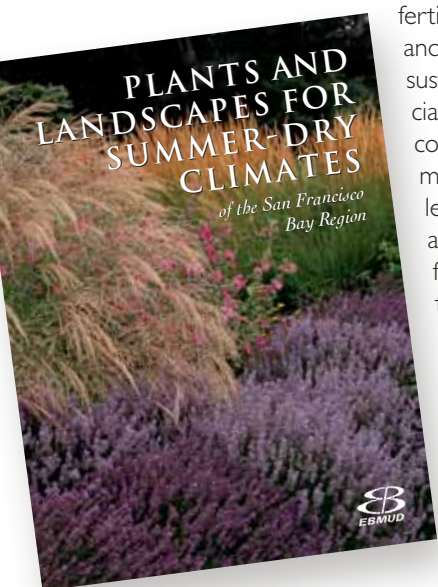
An elegant garden and lower water bills are not the only benefits. Sustainable landscapes improve soil health and do not require

fertilizers and pesticides that run off and pollute our local waterways. A sustainable landscape attracts beneficial insects and birds that help control pests without poison. Less mowing and pruning means that less green waste is hauled away to a landfill. Ironically, we buy fertilizers and compost to replace the very nutrients that are hauled away. Gas powered mowers, blowers, and hedge trimmers release more greenhouse gases than automobiles operated for the same amount of time.



Alstroemeria (Peruvian lily) flower in early to midsummer and need no summer water.

The summer season is a great time to plan a sustainable landscape because in our climate, the autumn is the best time of year to plant. There are plenty of resources to help: Visit www.ebmud.com/watersmart for information about lawn conversion rebates and to purchase our plant book. The Bay-Friendly Gardening pages at www.stopwaste.org are an excellent resource as well. You can also ask staff at your local nursery about sustainable landscaping and plants best suited to your area.



Before You Dig – Call 811

Everyone knows to call 911 in an emergency. Calling 811 is a good way to prevent emergencies. Are you planning to build a deck? Plant a tree? Build a backyard pool? Install sump pumps? First call 811, the national “Call Before You Dig” number. It was created to protect you from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines.

The old carpenter’s rule – check twice before cutting once – is good advice when digging. What’s down there? Pipelines, conduits, wires and cables. There’s water, sewer, gas, natural gas, phone and cable services, even electricity. Does anyone have an easement across your property? If so, you should request that it be marked. Do you really want to risk being injured, disrupting services to an entire neighborhood, or being held responsible for fines and repairs?

Never assume you know what’s below.

Smart digging means calling 811 before every job. Whether you are a homeowner or a professional excavator or contractor, one call to 811 gets underground utility lines marked up to your property line – for free. The only way to reach ALL the utilities that may be underground in your area is to call 811 at least two working days before beginning excavation.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Here’s how 811 works. Your call goes to Underground Service Alert (USA) North, which notifies all local utilities of your digging plans. Meanwhile, mark your proposed excavation area. On paved surfaces, use white chalk-based paint. On dirt, used flags or stakes. You will receive a list of the notified utilities, and they will

dispatch professional locating crews to mark their lines in the public rights-of-way, at no cost to you. EBMUD receives about 60,000 requests a year. We mark the water pipe from our water main to your meter. (A chalk line from the meter to the

house valve will show approximately where your service runs.) Once the lines

are marked, you or your contractor can dig safely. If you believe a utility has not marked its lines, call 811 again. Safe digging is no accident. Know what’s below!

Immediately notify utilities about any type of contact or damage to their wires or pipes. If there is damage to PG&E electric wires or gas pipelines, or a gas leak, take these steps:

- Move to a safe location
- Call 911
- Call PG&E at 1-800-743-5000

Backyard Basics for a Clean Bay

If your summer activities include cleaning the BBQ, controlling pests around the house or yard, killing weeds in the garden, or maintaining the pool or spa, take care to ensure San Francisco Bay is protected. Many household chemicals used around the home are toxic and proper disposal should never include pouring down the drain. These chemicals can interfere with the biological system at the wastewater treatment plant and potentially pass through to the

Bay. Unwanted and excess household chemicals should be dropped off at your local household hazardous waste facility.

Better yet, use non-toxic chemicals in the first place. Visit www.ebmud.com/cleanbay and check out our *Grow It!* guide for ideas on growing a vibrant garden by creating healthy soil, planting the right plants for your

climate zone, and using less-toxic pesticides and organic pest control methods.

If you have a pool or spa, look for copper-free products for algae control. Copper is effective because the form used in algacide products is toxic, even in small amounts, to aquatic plants and animals such as shellfish in early life stages. Check with your pool supply company for available copper-free alternatives.

For more information on how to keep the Bay healthy, visit www.ebmud.com/cleanbay or contact EBMUD’s Environmental Services at cleanbay@ebmud.com or (510) 287-1651. Remember that a clean Bay begins with you!



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Board meetings are open to the public and held the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 1:15 pm in the EBMUD Board Room, 2nd Floor, 375 Eleventh Street, Oakland.

Dennis M. Diemer, *General Manager*

Where to call for...

- Questions about your EBMUD bill
- Emergencies or open hydrants (24 hrs.)
- EBMUD street work information
- Water conservation questions

Call toll-free 1-866-40-EBMUD (1-866-403-2683)

- Jobs Hotline: (510) 287-0742
- TTY/TDD for hearing impaired: (510) 763-1035