

IWVWD General Manager's Column
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Time to “Fall Back” When it Comes to Water Use

By Don Zdeba

Fall has arrived in the Indian Wells Valley and with it comes shorter days, cooler nights, and so many more activities taking place now that school is back in session and temperatures are more moderate. You've probably noticed that every weekend is full of community events. Fall is my favorite time of the year. I enjoy seeing pumpkins, scarecrows and the harvest-themed decorations people display at their homes and businesses. Fall is also the time to adjust your landscape irrigation. As with Daylight Savings Time, think “fall back”. This is the time of year that Southern Californians typically waste the most water. Even though temperatures can still be warm during the day, lawns and plants begin to go dormant and require much less water. You can easily reduce your outdoor water use 40 to 70 percent during the fall and winter and still maintain your landscaping.

Lawns require much less water during the months of October, November and December. Normally, watering four to six minutes two to three times per week will be sufficient. Established shrubs and trees require even less. The savings can add up to hundreds, even thousands a gallons over the season.

Fall is also the best time to plant California-friendly native plants, so if you are considering xeriscape or even just beautifying your yard next spring with some new plants, this is the time to do it. If you would like some ideas for xeriscape, we have a variety of printed materials in our lobby and electronic information on the conservation page of our web site. If you prefer personal assistance, contact the Water District office and request a consultation with one of our volunteer XERIC© Ambassadors. The consultations are free and the Ambassadors are experts in plants that are compatible with our climate and soil conditions.

I'd like to take this opportunity to also update you on current projects at the Water District. First, we expect Onstott Construction to complete the remaining permanent pavement repairs in November. This project began in August and involved paving several patches where service lateral repairs had been made over the past year. Surveying for the Ward line extension from Primavera to Herbert streets was completed this month. We will soon be requesting bids to re-line the interiors of four of our water storage tanks, including the tank at Cerro Coso College. The work is being planned for late December/early January. We have also completed a Needs Assessment in preparation to implement a Geographic Information System (GIS) over the next several years to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present all types of geographical data for informed decision making.

Another topic we are excited about is that we have listened to feedback from our customers and implemented on-line bill payments. You may now pay your bill in the

comfort of your own home or anywhere else you have access to the internet. To access the site, go to the District's website at www.iwvwd.com and click the "Pay On-Line Now" link at the top of the home page to set up your User Account. Once an account is established, customers can make real-time payments using Visa, MasterCard and Discover credit cards. Debit cards with a credit card option can also be used. Another great feature, particularly if you are a long-time customer of the District, is you can look at the history of your use going back as far as 2003. The data can be displayed as a graph, a table, or both. Though we just recently made this option available, we are already approaching 200 customers that have created accounts. Please consider the convenience of this option and sign up.

The staff of the Indian Wells Valley Water District is here to assist with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your service. Enjoy the fall season and remember to "fall back" with respect to your landscape irrigation.