

# WATERWISE FRONT YARD EXHIBIT



This exhibit demonstrates several ways to manage water in your yard, including slowing flow, spreading it out, sinking it in, storing it, and saving it. Being waterwise means making the best use of the water you have. Even the materials used to cover the ground and/or amend the soil are part of a complete waterwise system you can add to your landscape. What's the benefit of a waterwise plan? First, you make better use of a precious resource. Especially in Southern California, water can be scarce at times, and making the best use of it just makes sense. Minimizing water waste is always a good strategy when planning your landscape. Also, it's good for your yard, the community and the ocean, since water in our drainage systems eventually reach the sea. Water runoff can also carry silts and particulates that eventually clog our county drainage systems. In time, that can cause flooding and other damage during wetter years. So, why pay for more water than you need from your provider when you can capture and use a lot of what you need with the right waterwise plan? Save money, county services and the ocean, while improving the health of your garden. Not bad for a single landscaping strategy!

## Planting Your Plan



The Garden's Waterwise Front Yard Exhibit demonstrates many ways to incorporate waterwise plans for any yard. Some of these strategies are perfect DIY projects, and some require professional assistance. We're here to give you DIY tips on how to perfect your waterwise plan and, when you need to, how to hire the right professionals. Keep reading to learn about the waterwise strategies in this exhibit, including how to slow it, spread it, sink it, store it, and save it. We are here to help!

## WATERWISE FRONT YARD EXHIBIT (continued) SLOW IT & SPREAD IT



Permeable Pavement: There are several choices of permeable paving available that allow water to percolate, such as the flagstone pathway shown here. This offers a clean, neat appearance, supports foot traffic, and assist with water management and weed control. It is permeable, allowing rain water, and/or any excess irrigation, to seep into the ground instead of running off, especially for gentle slopes like this one. When installed on a weed barrier cloth, it reduces time and effort weeding for several years. They also have small holes which allow water to pass through. So, you keep the water on your property.



Retaining Walls: It's common to think of retaining walls as a design feature more than a waterwise strategy. But consider the separation of plants with different watering needs. This allows you to designate where, and how much, certain areas of your yard are watered. And, if an overage of water occurs on higher ground, it sinks in and spreads to lower, adjacent planters. It's a perfect reuse of water. There are many materials available for building retaining walls. Free-stacking (without mortar) stones, like the one shown made from recycled concrete waste allows water to flow to adjacent planters through the wall itself.



Diversion Channels: This is a DIY project you can do with left over construction materials. We used a few left over roof tiles, turned them upside down and overlaid them so water would flow downhill through the channel. It doesn't even require adhesive, just a little planning. During a good rain, overflow from the catch basin flows down the diversion channel to the next planter. This keeps the basin from overflowing all over the yard, and puts the water where it can be most useful. Flooding areas of your yard by capturing rain is not the best option. So, with a bit of creativity, you can "share the wealth" of water.

## WATERWISE FRONT YARD EXHIBIT (continued) STORE IT & SAVE IT



Green Wall (reusing water): Water can be used for more than one purpose and even for more than one plant. This Green Wall, or vertical garden, adds color and interest to the look of our front yard, but the water used to keep it green gets maximum use. First, the green wall is watered from above, allowing the water to filter down to the lower plants, effectively “sharing” it. Once it completes its journey through the wall of plants, any excess water is directed into the rain barrel beneath it. There it is stored and can be used for other plants or purposes. A perfect example of “More Beauty, Less Water.”



Rain Barrels: Runoff from rain and morning dew condensation on your roof really adds up. A gutter system with downspouts collects runoff, but doesn't allow you to use it when and where it's most efficient. Even in our drought prone county, rain barrels are surprisingly effective at collecting roof runoff. Typical rain barrels hold 50 gallons, but you can get larger ones, and in many shapes, styles, and colors to compliment your yard. Using more than one barrel gives the best result. The rain barrel in this exhibit not only matches the decor but captures two sources of water—roof runoff *and* green wall drainage.



Rain Chains: This is an effective way to add decor to your garden and direct rain water where it can best be used. When rain chains are combined with other strategies (see below), they can collect rain in specific locations that can be used in a number of ways. Rain chains also add interest to gardens. On their own, they are decorative when it's not raining. But when it *does* rain, they are beautiful to watch as rain drops are caught and trickles and travels. Some make soothing sounds as the water splashes its way to the bottom of the chain. This one empties into a catch basin which allows the water to sink in, not flood the yard.

## WATERWISE FRONT YARD EXHIBIT (continued) SINK IT



Slow it! Rain Catch Basin: Whether you have a rain chain or a downspout, having a catch basin increases the amount of water that stays on your property. The basin waters the surrounding plants but the shape and fill materials in the basin hold rain water until it eventually sinks into the ground. This process cleanses the soil beneath and provides a long term water supply to root systems. It can even spread to nearby planters with some underground flow paths created to encourage water flow direction. You can also install drainage pipes underground to specifically direct water to other areas of your yard.



Sink it! High Efficiency Irrigation: We can not say enough about making the most of your irrigation. The right flow rate, frequency, duration and direction of irrigation combine to ensure conservation of water and the health of your yard. Even the time of day makes a big difference in how much sinks in and how much is wasted through evaporation. This is definitely an area of landscaping you want professional help with. There are so many options to consider, it can be overwhelming. That's why we offer irrigation workshops! Contact our Education Manager for details or ask one of our staff about irrigation.



Slow It, Sink It, Save It! Being waterwise is not just about planting drought tolerant plants. In fact, you can plant a variety of plant types and still be waterwise. The key is keeping the water on your property, directing water where it is best used, using the right soils, selecting plants that don't need constant watering, and placing plants where they make the most use of the water they get. For example, placing plants that need more drainage up-slope from those that need moist soil allows the plants to get what they need and your water use is optimize. Ask our staff about waterwise planning for your yard.