

Media Invitation

For Immediate Release



October 24, 2007

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California-Friendly Gardening Festival Rescheduled Due to Fires New Date: Saturday, November 10, 9am-3pm Fire-related activities added to the program.

Rancho San Diego, CA – In response to the County's fire crisis, the Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College has changed the date for its California Friendly Gardening Festival FROM Saturday, October 27, TO Saturday, November 10, 9am-3pm. The Garden has added activities to support County firefighters and survivors, and to highlight its fire-wise landscaping programs. In addition to its regularly scheduled activities, detailed below, the Garden will present a tribute to Cal Fire and the San Miguel Firefighters at the grand opening program of the new irrigation exhibit. Ten per cent of the Garden's proceeds, and donations collected from participants, will go to the Red Cross to help fire survivors. A drawing for a gift certificate of \$100 for fire resistive plants will be held, tours of the fire-wise gardening exhibit will be offered, and information will be available about fire-wise landscaping classes. An updated event program will be available by Friday, October 26, on the Garden's website at www.thegarden.org.

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The regularly scheduled activities for the festival come at just the right time to help San Diegans learn about water-wise landscapes suited for our semi-arid climate, and to find beautiful drought-tolerant and fire-resistive plants that will bring their landscapes to life. The festival comes at the end of another historically dry year, and on the heels of the recent federal court ruling to restrict operations on pumps that supply water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and ultimately to 3 million San Diego County residents. “Given this historically dry year, the current fire crisis, and the upcoming restrictions on water supplies from the Delta, drought-tolerant and fire-resistive landscapes are an increasingly important water conservation and safety measure,” said Marty Eberhardt, Executive Director of the Garden. “The festival offers a marketplace for drought-tolerant and fire-resistive plants from local nurseries, and education about California-Friendly landscapes in a family-friendly environment that promises activities and fun for everyone.” The beautiful plantings and displays at The Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College will be the backdrop for the festival. The event is free and open to the public, with free parking.

This year’s festival will include the unveiling of the Garden’s new Irrigation Exhibit. This impressive new exhibit helps to clarify the enigma of irrigation design by giving an overview of five important irrigation design components: sprinkler selection and spacing, drip irrigation principles, system flow capacity, proper zoning of sprinkler valves and irrigation control options. The opening is scheduled for 10am during the festival. Sponsors include the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the Toro Foundation, and Hunter Industries.

Several varieties of low-water-use plants from local nurseries will be on sale, and visitors can get water-saving tips for their entire home by visiting the conservation booth hosted by San Diego water agencies. The Garden’s docents will offer lovely container gardens, and the Gift Shop will be well-stocked with a full range of gardening books and supplies for the onset of fall gardening. Activities for children will be offered, and visitors of all ages will enjoy the food and live entertainment offered throughout the day.

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The “Ask the Experts” corner returns, featuring landscape designers and architects, and a certified arborist offering free consultations to the public. Homeowners are encouraged to bring photos and diagrams of their yards for feedback during their 20-minute free consultation. Reservations for this popular program are highly recommended, and can be made by calling 619-660-0614, extension 10.

Nan Sterman, gardening expert, writer, and host of the KPBS gardening show, *A Growing Passion*, will give a talk entitled “Garden Within Your Watering Means”. Included are best gardening practices for our Mediterranean climate, followed by an introduction to the wide selection of Mediterranean climate plants including trees, bulbs, perennials, shrubs, herbs, and more – all one would need to create a beautiful and satisfying garden. She will also sign her new book, *California Gardener’s Guide Volume 2*. Other experts will offer mini-lectures throughout day on a variety of topics including native plants and backyard composting.

Tickets for an opportunity drawing packed with fabulous prizes will be on sale throughout the day during the event. Prizes include nursery gift certificates, free gardening classes, and a **grand prize of a home landscape re-design by Chris Wotruba of Perennial Adventure**. In addition, winners of the Garden’s second annual scarecrow contest will be announced at the event.

The Water Conservation Garden is an award-winning, 5-acre water-conservation demonstration garden run under the auspices of a joint powers authority. Its member agencies are the San Diego County Water Authority, Otay Water District, Helix Water District, Padre Dam Water District, the City of San Diego, Sweetwater Authority, and the Grossmont-Cuyamaca College District. The Garden receives support through its member agencies, memberships, donations, grants, facility rentals and gift shop sales.

The Garden is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is signage for self-guided tours. Evening and weekend tours, classes, and events are available to visitors. Directions to the Garden are listed below. Call (619) 660-0614 for further information and visit the web site at www.thegarden.org.

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Directions to the Garden: The Water Conservation Garden is located at 12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West in El Cajon, where Jamacha Rd. (not Jamacha Blvd.) and Hwy 94 meet. From Hwy 15 or Hwy 805, merge onto Hwy 94 East to Cuyamaca College Drive West. From Hwy 8 take the 2nd St. off ramp in El Cajon, which turns into Jamacha Rd and then turn onto Cuyamaca College Drive West. For Information about the garden, including detailed directions and a map, go to: www.thegarden.org.

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