

# Climate-Appropriate Plants for Your Drought-Tolerant Garden

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's (MWD) Turf Replacement Program incentivizes Rancho Water customers who remove their water-demanding turf and replace it with climate-appropriate alternatives that require far less water. While the overall goal of the program is to achieve outdoor water savings through landscape transformations, the District also encourages the installation of healthy, sustainable landscapes that will enhance our local environment.

## What is Sustainable Landscaping?

Sustainable landscapes are designed to thrive in local temperatures, rainfall, and weather patterns. A good sustainable landscape works with nature, not against it, and does well with little to no human help.

## What are Climate-Appropriate Plants?

Climate-appropriate or "California-friendly" plants have evolved over time to thrive in our unique Mediterranean climate conditions and are adapted to our hot and dry summers. Compared to turf, they require significantly less water and increase the biodiversity of plant, animal, and insect populations within our natural ecosystem.



## What About Artificial or Synthetic Turf?

While artificial turf requires less water than a natural turf lawn, climate-appropriate plants provide a healthier and more ecologically sound alternative. Therefore, artificial turf is not included in MWD's Turf Replacement Program. Here are some reasons why:

### Artificial turf may contain pollutants

- Pollutants like heavy metals & chemicals may runoff artificial turf & contaminate surface or groundwater
- Artificial turf has a relatively short lifespan and may eventually end up in landfills

### Artificial turf is not a living landscape and does not:

- Increase biodiversity or provide habitat for local fauna
- Foster healthy soils
- Sequester carbon or produce oxygen
- Cool surrounding air temperatures (artificial turf gets extremely hot during the summer months, contributing to the heat island effect by increasing air temperatures in urban areas)

### Artificial turf is not always water free

- Homeowners often spray down artificial turf during the summer months so that it's comfortable for humans and animals to walk on
- Water is often needed to clean the turf for sanitation reasons

