THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT • PROUDLY SERVING EAST COUNTY AND THE SOUTH BAY SINCE 1956

pipeline

WINTER 2023

A NEWSLETTER FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT

Dedicated to Community Service





CA Department of Water Resources conducting the first media snow survey of the season in the Sierra Nevada.

(Photo by DWR)

Customers Should Continue Conserving Despite Water and Snow Levels

As California is facing a very rainy winter season, the Otay Water District encourages all customers to continue preparing for a return to dry conditions.

While the recent storms have filled many of California's reservoirs to average or above-average levels, much of the state is still in drought following the past three years of extreme drought.

On Jan. 3, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) conducted its first snow survey of the season. On average, the Sierra snowpack supplies about 30% of California's water needs and is an important factor in determining how DWR manages the state's water resources.

The manual survey recorded 55.5 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of 17.5 inches. The snow water equivalent measures the amount of water contained in the snowpack and is a key component of DWR's water supply forecast.

Despite the snowpack levels, conditions this season have proven similar to last year when California saw early rainstorms and strong December snow totals only to have the driest January through March on record.

Science suggests that the western United States is dealing with a long-term trend of hotter and drier weather-spanning decades, with shorter and more intense wet periods. This indicates that the state's wetter years buy us time to prepare for drier years in the future.

In San Diego County, rainstorms have served as a reminder to turn off irrigation systems during and for at least 48 hours after measurable rainfall. Otay offers its residential and commercial customers rebates on smart irrigation controllers that automatically adjusts your watering schedule for weather changes. To apply, visit otaywater.gov/conservation-programs.

The San Diego region also has enough water for the foreseeable future due to regional and local investments in diverse supply sources. However, it is important that District customers continue making the most out of each drop by following the prohibited water-use actions in Otay's service area. For information on drought and to see a list of prohibited actions, visit otaywater.gov/drought.

Sources: San Diego County Water Authority, sdcwa.org; CA Department of Water Resources, water.ca.gov.

Financial Help is Available to Pay Water Bills



Otay is sending a friendly reminder to its residential customers that they may be eligible for financial help to pay their water or sewer bills. The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) is a one-time, federally funded relief program for low-income households who have struggled to make bill payments before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is administered by the Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee (MAAC). Payments are made directly to the Otay Water District. For more information, visit maacproject.org/lihwap, call (619) 349-0123, or email water@MAACproject.org.

Showcase Your Water-Saving Garden to Win Prizes

Make 2023 the year to celebrate your outdoor water achievements by entering your drought-tolerant yard in the District's WaterSmart Landscape Contest. The contest is now accepting applications and nominations. Submit photos, a plant list, and your landscape transformation story for a chance to win a $250 gift card to a nursery of your choice, a goodie bag, and more. For details, visit otaywater.gov/landscape-contest.





Leak Inspections Are Underway in Otay's Service Area

Otay's annual Leak Detection and Repair Program began on Jan. 30 with an estimated completion date of April 28. The District's contractor, Utility Services Associates, will inspect approximately 171 miles of potable water mains in Spring Valley and Jamul, along with potable and recycled water mains in areas of Chula Vista. Customers may see workers inspecting the meter in front of their property. The inspection is part of the District's annual preventative maintenance program to safeguard its water supply and reduce water loss. To learn more, visit otaywater.gov/leak-detection-program.

2023

New Year, New Water Savings

Apply for a Rebate!

Add saving water to your list of 2023 resolutions. Consider upgrading your toilets, washers, sprinklers, and other devices that can help you save money and water in your home or business. Otay offers its residential and commercial customers rebates on turf replacement and various devices for indoor and outdoor use. There are specific requirements to receive a rebate. For a full list of rebates and eligibility, visit otaywater.gov/conservation-programs.

Residential rebates:

– High-efficiency washers | $145
– High-efficiency toilets | $40
– Rain barrel | $50
– Cistern | $300-$450
– Irrigation controller | $130 (under 1 acre)
– Irrigation controller | $35 (over 1 acre)
– Rotating sprinkler nozzles | $2/nozzle
– Moisture sensor | $80
– Flow monitoring device | $125
– Turf replacement | up to $4 per sq. ft.

Commercial rebates:

– High-efficiency toilets | $40
– Ultra low and zero water urinals | $200
– Plumbing flow control valves | $5
– Irrigation controller | $35
– Soil moisture sensor systems | $35
– Rotating nozzles for pop-up spray heads | $2/nozzle
– Large rotary nozzles | $13/set
– In-stem flow regulators | $1
– Air-cooled ice machines | $1,000
– Connectionless food steamers | $485
– Turf replacement | up to $4 per sq. ft.

Appreciating the Winter Garden Focus on Foliage



While gardens in other regions sleep under a blanket of snow, ours waken in winter, thanks to the arrival of precious rainfall. This is our best planting time. Plan before you plant and consider garden textures that come from the amazing variety of foliage – leaves in different shapes, sizes, colors, and more.

Include plants whose leaves are:

- Small and fine like California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*) or Salvia 'Hot Lips.'
- Large and broad like bear's breech (*Acanthus molle*) and shell ginger (*Alpinia zerumbet*).
- Sculpted, toothed, or scalloped at the edges like lavenders, *Kalanchoe*, *Monstera*, and Sycamore.
- Needle-like like pines and *Grevillea*.
- Fleshy and succulent like Aeoniums and Aloes.
- Upright to keep them out of the sunlight, like conebushes (*Leucadendron*) and Arabian lilac (*Vitex trifolia* '*Purpurea*').
- Grassy or strappy like *Lomandra*, *Dianella*, Kangaroo paw (*Anigozanthos*), and *Iris*.
- Single like *Acacia*, bay, and *Bougainvillea*.
- Divided into multiple leaflets like walnut, gold medallion tree (*Cassia leptophylla*), Jacaranda, and tipu (*Tipu Tipuana*).
- Shiny like *Camellia* and jade (*Crassula ovata*).
- Dull like Mexican snowball (*Echeveria elegans*) and *Sansevieria*.
- Fuzzy like Indian mallow, South African daisy, and air plants.
- Smooth like citrus and *Camellia*.
- Waxy like native chalk fingers (*Dudleya*) and *Agave*.
- Rough surfaced like Cleveland sage (*Salvia clevelandii*) and *Lantana*.
- Spiny like golden barrel cactus (*Echinocactus grusonii*) crown of thorns (*Euphrobia milii*).
- Ferny like California poppy and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*).

Consider the texture of plants with different overall shapes and structures, too. Here are several:

- Umbrella shaped like live oak tree (*Quercus agrifolia*), dragon tree (*Dracaena draco*), and New Zealand Christmas Tree (*Metrosideros excelsa*).
- Vase shaped like most bromeliads, some *Agave*, some Yucca.
- Rounded like manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos*), flannel bush (*Fremontia*), and bush germander (*Teucrium* fruticans).
- Tall and narrow like *Cordyline*, shoestring acacia (*Acacia stenophylla*), and candelabra tree (*Euphorbia ingens*).
- Broad and wide like California bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*) and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*).
- Low, mat growing like a groundcover like little pickles (*Othonna capensis*), prostrate rosemary, and South African daisy (*Arctotis*).
- Angular and geometric like *Yucca*, Mexican grass tree (*Dasylirion quadrangulatum*), and *Agave*.
- Rosette shaped like *Aeonium*, and stonecrops (*Echeveria*).

Leaf color contributes to winter interest as well. With most flowers sleeping, add plants with different leaf colors. Combine leaf colors or – my favorite – go with just one leaf color but vary the shape/size/textures. I am also partial to burgundy, purple, and/or red leaves contrasted against a background of silver and blue leaves.

These plants should help you think about leaf color:

- Bright green like century plant *Agave americana*, cabbage tree (*Cussonia paniculata*).
- Deep green-leaved toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*), oaks, and more.
- Chartreuse leaved *Lomandra* 'Del Sol' and 'Sunset Gold' breath-of-heaven (*Coleonema*).
- Blue-green leaved 'Canyon Prince' wild rye (*Leymus condensatus* '*Canyon Prince*').
- Silver is a common color for drought-tolerant plants including many *Agaves* and *Aloe*, South African daisy (*Arctotis*), dune sage (*Salvia africana-lutea*), and other sages.
- Burgundy, purple, and/or red-leaved plants such as smoke bush (*Cotinus coggygria*), some *Cordyline*, some New Zealand Flax (*Phormium*), the tree *Leptospermum* 'Dark Shadows', and my favorite, conebush, 'Ebony' (*Leucadendron* '*Ebony*').
- Purple leaves like Arabian lilac (*Vitex trifolia* '*Purpurea*') whose leaves are green on top and dusky purple below. Newly emerged leaves stand vertical as if to show off their purple undersides.
- Variegated green and gold like *Furcraea foetida* 'Mediopicta.
- Variegated green and pale yellow like 'Meerlo' lavender (incredibly fragrant foliage, too).
- Variegated green and white such as *Lomandra* 'Platinum Beauty.'
- Variegated reds including *Cordyline* 'Pink Passion' or 'Electric Pink.'
- Variegated mixed colors *Aeonium* 'Sunburst' leaves are green with pale yellow stripes, edged in red. *Aeonium* '*Zwartkopf*' succulent blades are nearly black, but the base is green, so the rosette looks black with a green "eye." 'Jester' conebush leaves are striped green, red, and yellow all at once.

Consider leaf texture and color, then take your cues from nature, and layer different plants vertically. Start with tall plants (mostly trees) for a canopy. Next, plant tall shrubs, then shorter shrubs. Tall perennials and grass-like plants mix with the shorter shrubs, as do bulbs. Annual plants are the shortest and are a viable choice for the front of the garden, along with groundcovers that grow broad and wide. Choose from this menu to make a gorgeous, drought-tolerant winter garden.

Nan Sterman is a garden expert, author, designer, and educator. Nan leads international garden tours, is the author of several books, and hosts the show *A Growing Passion* on KPBS TV, waterwisegarden.com

THE water conserving garden

Register for classes and events at thegarden.org or call (619) 660-0614 x10



El Departamento de Recursos Hídricos de California realiza el primer estudio de nieve de la temporada en la Sierra Nevada.

(Foto cortesía de DWR)

Los clientes deben continuar conservando a pesar de los niveles de agua y nieve

A pesar de que California enfrenta una temporada invernal muy lluviosa, el Distrito de Agua de Otay invita a todos sus clientes a prepararse para el regreso a las condiciones secas.

Si bien las tormentas recientes han llenado muchos de los reservorios de California a niveles promedio o superiores al promedio, gran parte del estado padece sequía a consecuencia de los últimos tres años de sequía extrema.

El 3 de enero, el Departamento de Recursos Hídricos de California (DWR, por sus siglas en inglés) realizó su primer estudio de nieve de la temporada. En promedio, la capa de nieve de la Sierra abastece alrededor del 30 % del agua de California, y es un factor importante para determinar la manera en que el DWR administrará los recursos hídricos del estado.

La encuesta manual registró 55.5 pulgadas de profundidad de nieve y un equivalente en agua de nieve de 17.5 pulgadas. El equivalente de agua de nieve mide la cantidad de agua contenida en la capa de nieve y es un componente clave para el pronóstico de suministro de agua del DWR.

A pesar de los niveles de nieve acumulada, las condiciones de esta temporada han sido similares a las del año pasado donde California experimentó tormentas tempranas y niveles de nieve importantes en diciembre culminando en los meses más secos registrados entre enero y marzo.

La ciencia indica que el oeste de los Estados Unidos está lidiando con una tendencia a largo plazo de un clima más cálido y seco que se prolonga durante décadas con períodos húmedos más cortos e intensos. Esto significa que los años más húmedos del estado nos dan tiempo para prepararnos para los años más secos en el futuro.

En el condado de San Diego, las tormentas nos han recordado que debemos apagar los sistemas de riego durante y después de 48 horas de una lluvia mensurable. Otay ofrece a sus clientes residenciales y comerciales reembolsos en controladores de riego inteligentes que ajustan automáticamente su horario de riego según los cambios climáticos. Para solicitar un reembolso, por favor visite otaywater.gov/reembolsos-y-programas.

La región de San Diego también tiene suficiente agua para el futuro cercano gracias a las inversiones regionales y locales que se han realizado en diversas fuentes de suministro. Sin embargo, es importante que los clientes del Distrito continúen aprovechando al máximo cada gota de agua siguiendo las acciones de uso de agua que no están permitidas en el área de servicio de Otay. Para obtener información sobre la sequía y ver una lista de actividades prohibidas, por favor visite otaywater.gov/sequia.

Fuentes: San Diego County Water Authority, sdcwa.org; Departamento de Recursos Hídricos de California, water.ca.gov.

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OTAY WATER DISTRICT – Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meets the first Wednesday of the month at 3:30 p.m. in the board meeting room at 2554 Sweetwater Springs Boulevard, Spring Valley, CA 91978. The public is encouraged to attend or watch the live stream at otaywater.gov.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT CALL (619) 670-2222 OR GO TO OTAYWATER.GOV

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