



**24 Hour Service
949.453.5300**

Should you discover a disruption in your water service or other problems call the IRWD 24-hour emergency line and a representative will assist you.

The mission of Irvine Ranch Water District, a public agency, is to provide reliable, high quality water and sewer service in an efficient, cost effective manner and environmentally sensitive way that provides a high level of customer satisfaction.

IRWD Board of Directors

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**IRVINE RANCH
WATER DISTRICT**

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Community Calendar

IRWD HOLIDAY & EVENTS

- Monday, February 16 - IRWD Holiday (offices closed)
- Friday, March 27 from 6 to 9 p.m. - IRWD Landscape Workshop
- Saturday, April 25; Saturday, May 2; and Saturday, May 16 - IRWD Resident Tours. See page one for information.

SEA AND SAGE AUDUBON EVENTS

- Sunday, March 8 and April 12 - Monthly bird walk at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Audubon House - Open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. For more information contact the Audubon House at (949) 261-7963 or visit their website at www.seaandsageaudubon.org.

CITY OF IRVINE

- The City of Irvine, in partnership with the Legal Aid Society of Orange County (LASOC), Internal Revenue Service, Orange County United Way, Orange County One-Stop and Coastline Community College, is offering free tax preparation services for taxpayers who earned less than \$56,000 in 2008. Qualifying taxpayers who live, work or attend school in Irvine can receive help filing their taxes at the Orange County One-Stop Center and the Lakeview Senior Center in Irvine through April 15. IRS-trained volunteers will help complete and electronically file returns at no cost. The One-Stop Center is open Tuesday through Thursday from 4 to 7:30 p.m. and on Saturday, February 7 and April 11 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is located at 125 Technology Dr., Suite 200, Irvine. The Lakeview Senior Center is open on Mondays from 5 to 8 p.m. and is located at 20 Lake Rd., Irvine. For more information or to schedule an appointment call (888) 434-8248. Walk-ins are welcome on a first-come, first-served basis.

FAMILIES FORWARD

- Due to the current economic crisis, the number of families coming to Families Forward for assistance increases weekly. Families Forward's mission is to help families in need achieve and maintain self-sufficiency through housing, counseling, education and other support services. Currently 100+ families receive groceries each week from the food assistance program. Help support these families through financial donations as well as food donations. Grocery and gas gift cards are also needed. Donations can be brought to Families Forward, 9221 Irvine Blvd., Irvine, CA 92618, Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. or Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call (949) 552-2727 for further information or visit their website at www.families-forward.org to learn more about the work of Families Forward.

IRVINE GARDEN CLUB

- Come and join the Irvine Garden Club for regular speakers on local gardening topics and to exchange growing tips and ideas. Meetings are held on the first Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m. (except Jan./July/Sept.). The meetings are held at IRWD. Visit www.irvinegardenclub.com or send an e-mail to Irvinegardenclub@yahoo.com.

SHADETREE PARTNERSHIP EVENTS

- Service hours are available for all volunteer tree planting activities. For more information call (949) 453-5312. Online registration available at www.shadetreepartnership.org.

MASTER GARDENERS OF ORANGE COUNTY

- The University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Orange County are a dedicated group of trained volunteers that provide assistance and share information about gardening in and around the Orange County area. For more information call their hotline at (714) 708-1646, visit their website at www.uccemg.com or send an e-mail to ucmastergardeners@yahoo.com.

ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF IRVINE

- Assistance League of Irvine Thrift and Gift Shop - 17801 Main Street, Suite H (Sky Park South), Irvine, (949) 955-3437. Donations welcome during normal business hours: Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Friday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. To learn more about the Assistance League and membership call (949) 725-9188 or visit their website at www.irvine.assistanceleague.org.

CELEBRATE UCI 2009 - Saturday, April 18

- One Day. One Campus. Many Options. Come to UCI's 31st annual Open House, one of the campus' oldest and most festive traditions. This spring event features games and rides for children, an Earth Day celebration, academic information, classic car show, campus tram tours, Waygoose Medieval Faire with food booths, demonstrations, rides, games, three stages of entertainment and much more. Everyone is welcome. It's an excellent opportunity to bring family and friends to visit and see what's new with the UCI campus. Join the alumni, staff, faculty, and students as they Celebrate UCI! Events and parking are free. For more information, call UCI at (949) 824-5182.



► It's important for IRWD customers to be Always Water Smart.

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► Switch in disinfectants from chloramines to chlorine.

PAGE 2



► Help us help you! Prevent sewage spills.

PAGE 2



► Fire-resistant California Friendly trees.

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Irvine Ranch Water District

Always Water Smart

pipelines

FEBRUARY | 2009

How You Can Be "Always Water Smart"

With the Governor's proclamation that California is in a drought, in combination with recent critical state water supply restrictions, now, more than ever, is the time to take advantage of IRWD's "Always Water Smart" rebate program.

These incentives will save you money when you purchase and install the following:

- high efficiency toilets (up to \$265 rebated per toilet),
- high efficiency washing machines (\$335 rebated),
- weather-based irrigation controllers (\$60 rebated per activated valve or \$750 rebated per irrigated acre),
- rotating nozzles (\$9 per nozzle rebated),
- synthetic turf (\$0.30 per square foot rebated).

What's more, you'll continue to save water and reduce your water bills over the lifetime of the water-saving devices or synthetic turf you install. For full details and rebate applications, visit www.AlwaysWaterSmart.com.

Free Water Awareness Tours

Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) offers free Water Awareness Tours to all its customers. The Spring tours will be held on April 25, May 2 and May 16.

These tours, open to those who live or work within IRWD boundaries, are an excellent opportunity to gain valuable information about the water system, wastewater treatment, recycled water use, and conservation tips. The free tours start promptly at 8 a.m. and conclude at approximately 2 p.m.

Customers may register on the IRWD Web site at www.irwd.com or call (949) 453-5500.

Love Your Garden and your water bill

SAVE WATER · SAVE MONEY · SAVE THE OCEAN

Join us for a **FREE** landscape workshop on **March 27, 2009 from 6 to 9 pm** at our Sand Canyon headquarters and learn the California friendly way to a beautiful landscape with less water and more money in your pocket.

- You'll learn:
- How to pick the right plants
 - How much to water your plants
 - How to water to reduce runoff

For more information and to RSVP, go to www.irwd.com or call 949-453-5327.



Noticed Chlorine in the Water? Here's Why...

If you've noticed a stronger chlorine taste or odor to the water recently, it's not your imagination. Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) has made a temporary switch in disinfectants from chloramines to chlorine. This temporary change is needed in order to make repairs to the ammonia feed line at one of our facilities. The change in taste and odor is normal and poses no health risk.

Chloramines, a combination of chlorine and ammonia, are generally used to disinfect water. During this period, however, chlorine alone is being used. It is common practice for utilities that use chloramines to periodically switch to chlorine alone in order to maintain optimal levels of disinfection within the water distribution system.

While the taste and odor of chlorine may be more noticeable, it remains safe to drink. Residents can minimize the chlorine taste and odor by keeping an open pitcher of water in the refrigerator for drinking. Cold water tastes better and the chlorine will naturally dissipate out of the water as it sits in the pitcher.

"We certainly understand our customers' preference to return to the use of chloramines because the chlorine taste and odor is much less noticeable," said IRWD Water Quality Director John Hills. "We apologize for the inconvenience but want residents to know that these changes are necessary to properly maintain our drinking water system while repairs are made to one of our facilities."

While this change in disinfection is currently scheduled to last through the summer, there is a chance that it could conclude sooner. Watch future editions of Pipelines and IRWD's web site at www.irwd.com for updates.

Help Us Help You!

Rocks or anything else dumped down a sewer manhole can cause many problems, including costly sewer spills. It's very important that anyone noticing dislodged manhole covers or any unusual activity around a manhole report it to the Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) immediately.

Last summer, a sewage spill occurred in Lake Forest, caused by a large pile of rocks that had been dumped in the sewer. The manholes in question are located along a nature trail in a heavily wooded area adjacent to Vista Verde Creek.

In December, more such vandalism was reported in the same area. IRWD emergency crews responded to a sewage spill that poured into the creek. Sandbags were placed to capture the 33,000-gallon spill. All but 8,100 gallons were captured before it continued to San Diego Creek, which feeds into the Newport Back Bay. Crews worked all night to contain the spill. Once the spill was contained, the rocks were discovered inside the sewer line. The rocks had flowed downstream and formed a pile, which inhibited sewage flow.

"There is a fine for anyone caught tampering with a utility," said Greg Springman, Collection Systems Manager. "This also has an environmental impact on our community."

If not caught in time, sewer spills can cause beach pollution. Many environmental agencies become involved whenever there is a sewage spill. Vandalized and other manholes in the area have been fitted with locking devices.

"Customers can help! Anyone who sees anything unusual, please contact IRWD as soon as possible," Springman said. "Vandalism is expensive to our rate payers."

Call (949) 453-5300 if you see anyone tampering with manhole covers, or any IRWD facility.



Rocks, such as these, at left, can cause a sewer spill, like the one pictured above.

Suggested Weekly Winter/Spring Irrigation Schedule

| Month | Turfgrass | Tree, Shrubs & Groundcover | % Option** |
|----------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| February | 2 days, 2 cycles* of 2 minutes each | 1 day, 2 cycles of 3 minutes each | 30% |
| March*** | 2 days, 2 cycles of 3 minutes each | 2 days, 2 cycles of 3 minutes each | 50% |
| April*** | 3 days, 2 cycles of 4 minutes each | 2 days, 2 cycles of 4 minutes each | 70% |

*By "cycling" the irrigation controller to turn on for the recommended number of minutes an hour apart, deeper watering and healthier root growth are gained, while runoff is reduced.

**The % option, either a button or a dial, permits the watering run times for all electric valves managed by a controller to be increased or decreased with just one adjustment by percentage.

***March/April is the most active growth period for turfgrass and other plants. Be sure to water adequately.

Always remember to turn water off before rains and let soil dry before turning water on again.

Irrigation tips 'n' tune-ups

Fire-resistant California Friendly Trees

In recent years, continuing drought in Orange County has predictably led to an increase in the number and intensity of brushfires that threaten foothill homes and countless acres of natural vegetation.

Creating a fire-resistant defensible space around your home includes establishing and maintaining landscaping with fire-safe and drought-resistant trees like those featured below. Of course, all trees will burn if there is enough heat and conditions are right. Nevertheless, keeping trees pruned and maintained is a crucial fire-protection strategy.

The California Forest Stewardship recommends the following irrigation and maintenance practices to support your landscape's fire resistance:

- Cultivate, amend and mulch the soil surface surrounding plants to enhance water penetration, retention/storage, reduce evaporation and to prevent compaction. Use permeable materials for drives, walks and patios.
- Place trees and shrubs in or adjacent to areas that are currently irrigated.
- Deep irrigate trees and shrubs every 20 to 30 days during the fire season.
- Maintain plant health and vigor; avoid crowding and over-competition for available soil, water and nutrients.
- Tree crowns should be separated by at least ten feet. Add five additional feet for every ten percent increase in slope (10 feet of separation on slopes 0 to 10%, 15 feet of separation on slopes from 11 to 20%, 20 feet on slopes from 21 to 30%, and so forth).
- Raise all tree crowns at least ten feet above soil grade; thin tree crowns (up to 25%) to reduce total fuels; do not top trees.
- Remove dead branches and large areas of dead foliage, all vines and loose, papery bark; remove flammable undergrowth and woody debris.



Australian tea tree

(*Leptospermum laevigatum*)

This medium-sized shrubby tree grows best in full sun. It features a rough, gray-brown trunk that twists and curves with age. Reaching 20 to 25 feet at full height, its dried leaves can be used to make a tea.



strawberry tree

(*Arbutus unedo*)

This gorgeous large evergreen shrub, or small tree, grows at a moderate rate to 8 to 15 feet tall with a 15-foot spread. It produces masses of beautiful urn-shaped white flowers and textured, strawberry-like fruits that attract birds. The trunk and branches of the strawberry tree are reddish-brown and become twisted with age.



coast live oak

(*Quercus agrifolia*)

This evergreen round-headed tree can reach 15 to 40 feet high and 20 feet wide. A California native, it grows very well from the coastal areas to the interior valleys, is drought tolerant, and will attract many birds and butterflies to your garden.

For more California Friendly plant suggestions, visit "The Garden Spot" at www.bewaterwise.com.