

Fall into planting: less watering, more cost savings



Imperata cylindrica: "Red Baron" is one of the easiest and most colorful additions to the low water zone.



Forestiera neomexicana: The New Mexican Privet's late-summer fruit is showy and attracts robins.

Fall can be a great time for tucking in a few more plants in the landscape. Contrary to the notion that planting should be done in spring, planting in fall provides several advantages.

- **LESS WATERING.** The cooler air temperature in fall allows you to water new plants less than if you planted them in mid-summer.
- **GREAT DEALS ON PLANTS.** Many nurseries and garden centers don't want overstock during the winter, so you can usually find discounted plants late summer through fall.
- **GET A JUMP ON SPRING.** Summer heat warms the soil into the fall. Warm soil allows the roots to continue growing, even though the stems and leaves may not grow much before winter. When spring arrives, the root system will be ready to grow a healthy plant sooner than those planted in spring.

When?

You can plant until the soil freezes, which is usually sometime in November. Be sure to water the plants periodically with a hose if you have already shut off your sprinkler system.

Which plants?

Trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses and perennial flowers can all be planted in fall.

Winter watering is critical

It's critical to winter water plants that are installed in the fall. Recently transplanted plants easily dry out. If they dry out, they will die. Only plant in the fall if you are able to water the plants occasionally throughout the winter. To do so, water the root ball and surrounding soil of plants one to two times per month from November to April on a warm winter day. If you are not able to winter water, wait until spring to plant.

Resources

If you haven't visited our xeriscape pages at csu.org, you are missing out. Visit and you will find an extensive plant database, ideas from our own experts and much more.

Outage? Main break? We're your first call ...

Thanks to some great employees and progressive technology, we're able to provide our community with some of the most reliable energy and water service in the nation. Still, we know there are times when the lights cut out or water runs down a street from a broken main. When that happens, give us a call so we can make repairs as efficiently as possible.

Water

When you call 448-4800 about a possible water main break, we send crews out to assess the situation. We then prioritize the break based on the amount of water leaking, impact to traffic, public safety and number of customers affected.

High-priority breaks are addressed immediately. Lower priority leaks that start on weekends or after hours are generally handled the next business day to avoid overtime pay.

Electricity

Call 888-278-6847 to use our Automated Service Center to report an outage or receive updated information on power outages. Options include:

- Confirmation we know of the outage
- Estimated duration
- Number of customers affected
- Information on the cause (if known)
- Request a return call when the outage is restored



The effectiveness of the Outage Management System relies on current customer information. Please confirm that we have your current phone number. Visit csu.org and access your online account, or call 448-4800.

Reinforcing electric reliability one pole at a time

They withstand wind, rain, snow, freezing temperatures, rodents, bugs, and sometimes even errant cars, all the while carrying electricity to thousands of homes and businesses.

They are wood poles – some 40,000 strong – and they play a critical role in our electric distribution system. All are undergoing a rigorous inspection over the next 10 years to help us continue to deliver reliable and safe power to you.

The program started last year with a random sampling to determine the scope and baseline condition of the wood poles. Using that data, the massive effort to inspect all poles began this year.

More than 400 high-priority poles could be replaced or reinforced in 2011 based on initial inspections.

About 10 percent of the system's poles will be inspected on an annual basis, and depending on the inspection results, some poles are injected with a fumigant to prevent and curtail decay,

some are reinforced, and some are completely replaced.

Crews inspect poles by striking them with a hammer to listen for hollow thuds that can signify decay, boring at the base to probe for internal decay pockets, and also digging six inches down at the base to check for surface decay.

We're managing costs by reinforcing – rather than replacing – vulnerable poles with a steel support at the base. This reinforcement helps older, but salvageable poles withstand harsh wind gusts and other weather-related factors.

The inspection and replacement program has an annual budget of about \$1 million; a considerable investment, but one that dwarfs the potential costs and inconvenience of decreased reliability and long-duration power outages. Through this program, and others like it, we're planning ahead to provide the best possible service and value to our customers.



About 40,000 poles will undergo inspection over next decade.

Cleaning up with Goodwill

This summer, we awarded Goodwill Industries of Colorado Springs® a janitorial service contract to maintain our Utilities Customer Service Center on Cascade Avenue.

This is the second agreement of this type. For the past three years, Goodwill has provided cleaning services at the Leon Young Service Center on Hancock Expressway.

The partnership is more than good business. Goodwill hires employees with developmental disabilities and economic disadvantages.

"Individuals are offered the opportunity to enter or re-enter the workplace and establish quality of life – something our organization supports and believes in," said Paul Brown, maintenance supervisor and contracts coordinator for Colorado Springs Utilities.

"We're proud to have Goodwill as a valued local vendor."



Rebate deadlines coming soon

If you're thinking of home improvements this fall, take note of these important rebate deadlines.

Many residential rebates are administered through Recharge Colorado under the Governor's Energy Office, including insulation, duct sealing, air sealing, gas-condensing furnaces, dishwashers, refrigerators, clothes washers, solar domestic hot water and wind power systems.

- If you are planning rebate purchases or installations for completion by Nov. 4, you must reserve your rebate through Recharge Colorado by Sept. 1 for solar hot water and wind systems, and by Oct. 1 for energy efficiency purchases.
- If you are slating rebate purchases or installations for completion between Nov. 4 through Dec. 31, you may apply for a rebate through Recharge Colorado Jan. 1-31, 2012 only.
- Visit rechargecolorado.com for details and to apply.

Other qualifying purchases on irrigation equipment, windows, toilets and photovoltaics are eligible for a rebate through our Colorado Springs Utilities program. The deadline for most purchases and your rebate application is Dec. 31, 2011. Visit csu.org for complete information.



Catch some rays at the Pikes Peak Tour of Sustainable Buildings

Join us at this free expo to check out renewable energy, efficiency, and sustainability displays and ideas. Plus, bring your incandescent bulbs for a free CFL exchange.

Saturday, Oct. 1, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. 2855 Mesa Road, Colorado Springs, secres.org

