

## **WATER-WISE GARDENING TIPS**

On average, most families use about 500 gallons of water per day, and over 30% is used to water their yards and gardens. By using some water-wise gardening ideas, you can reduce your water usage by 50% or more while keeping your yards and gardens green and healthy. These tips include:

- Follow the land by watching where rain runs after it falls onto your yard. The contours of the yard can be changes to catch rainwater, and speed or slow its flow, holding it in the ground for use by plants.
- Give plants only as much water as they need. Use efficient watering methods such as drip systems and soaker hoses that water closer to the plant roots. Keep in mind that plants adapted to dry summers do not need much water a few years after planting.
- Add compost or mulch to the soil. Compost helps the soil hold water and adds nutrients needed for plant growth. Mulch prevents the soil from overheating and drying out, as well as reduces weeds and slows erosion. Use 2"-4" underneath plants and shrubs.
- Tend patiently and keep in mind that plants will grow.
- Gather rainwater in buckets and save it for later use.
- Prune naturally by not forcing plants to grow into unnatural shapes.
- Layer plants to make shade and use species that are native to our area.
- Observe the natural shade and sun of your yard and plan your garden accordingly.

(Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Works Smart Gardening Program)