

A SORTED AFFAIR
by Jane Bogner

Free Water-Wise Gardening Classes in Vallejo and Benicia
March 21, 2010

Spring is here and, seeing our luscious green hills, we may forget that we are actually in a drought.

Our gardens are filling up with weeds that are taking advantage of the moisture.

If you are a backyard composter, let me share a little advice. If you have weeds, such as dandelions or oxalis, that you do not like in your garden, do not put them in your backyard bin. It is very difficult to get a high temperature that will kill these weed seeds or bulbs. It is better to put them in your curbside yardwaste cart and let the professionals handle it.

Before you head over to the big box stores to buy those seductive, colorful, and thirsty plants, take a few minutes to review just what you want in your garden.

The cities of Vallejo and Benicia are here to help. They are offering a series of free workshops on Water-Wise Landscaping.

The first class on Water-Wise Basics covers the basic principals of water-wise landscaping. Hands-on demonstrations and displays explain the importance of soil type, amendments, mulching, and basic garden design elements. Instructors are Meg Grumio (Benicia Community Garden Coordinator); Sue Alfeld (speaking on water conservation and gardening; and this writer who will talk about backyard composting.

The first class will be held on Monday, April 12 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the JFK Library, Joseph Room, 505 Santa Clara, in Vallejo. It will be repeated on Wednesday, April 14 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Heritage Hall, East 2nd at Military East, Benicia.

Reserve your seat for the Vallejo classes by calling Roger Judy at 707 648-5299 (rljudy@ci.vallejo.ca.us) or for the Benicia classes by calling Dave Wenslawski, 707 746-4792 (davidw@ci.benicia.ca.us.).

Irrigation Design is the subject of the second class. Larry Lamoreux will help you solve the mystery of irrigation systems and form strategies for how to use water wisely. He will bring the latest irrigation components and gadgets. There will also be a Master Gardener available to answer questions.

The irrigation class will be held in Vallejo on Monday, April 19, and in Benicia on Wednesday, April 21 (Same reservation information as above).

The third class is Water-Wise plant selection. Sue Wickham, a California Native Plant specialist, will give information on how to select the perfect drought-tolerant plants for your yard. Wickham and other gardeners will bring a sampling of trees, shrubs, perennials, and other plants.

The plant class will be held in Vallejo on Monday, April 26, and in Benicia on Wednesday, April 28.

You will come away from these classes with a better understanding of our Mediterranean-type climate, and have a chance to win water-savings tools and books.

The classes are sponsored by the water conservation programs of the Cities of Vallejo and Benicia, UCCE Master Gardeners, and Benicia Community Garden.

Check out www.vallejowater.org for other ways to save water and get rebates on toilets and irrigation controllers.

Native Plant Sale

To get your yard makeover started, come to our California Native plant sale on May 1 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Benicia Community Garden (East Second and Military East). Natives, landscaping, and vegetable plants will be available. Information: 707 747-5815.

Library Book Sale

The Vallejo Library's annual book sale starts on Monday March 22 and runs through April 1. Benicia Library has monthly book sales on the second Saturday.

VALCORE Recycling Board Secretary Jane Bogner's "A Sorted Affair" is published every other week in the Times-Herald. For recycling information call VALCORE Recycling at 645-8258 or visit

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