

the dirt



WINTER 2024 GARDENING NEWSLETTER

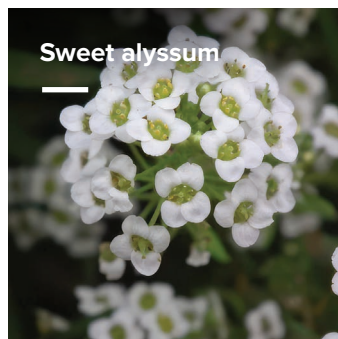
See your landscape in a new light.

Moon gardens come alive at night with a celestial glow.

Night falls early in winter, taking the spotlight off our landscapes. Why not add some dazzle to your yard with plants that glisten in the moonlight?

Billowy white blossoms and shimmering silver leaves reflect the moon's rays to create an ethereal quality perfect for nighttime enjoyment. Shasta daisies, sweet alyssum and white lupine are some show-stopping choices, while lamb's ear, dusty miller and sage add a subtle silver sheen that plays with light and shadow.

Night-bloomers like the moonflower and dragonfruit cactus wait until dusk to slowly open their blossoms to the night, emitting intoxicating scents similar to citrus and coconut to attract nocturnal pollinators.



The tuberose is a succulent revered for its beauty, with tall stalks topped with flowery clusters that produce a sweet honey nocturnal scent.

Plant these and others in your garden to create a dreamy, peaceful retreat, and consider soft gentle lighting to enhance the mood—casting your landscape in a new light—when it's dark.

Go to [IRWD.com/landscape](https://www.irwd.com/landscape) for more ideas.

Trim the tree, then compost it.



Pennie Louwers

Pennie Louwers | Master Gardeners of Orange County

Pennie Louwers, a Master Gardener since 2012, leads the group's compost team and is co-lead of its Pop-Up Plant Giveaway Project. "In 2008, I took a horticulture class at Saddleback College, fell in love with it, and took all the classes required to achieve a certificate in Horticulture and Landscape Design."

What are the benefits of Christmas tree composting?

Louwers: Living Christmas trees help fight climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide, and they support forests because new trees are planted to replace those harvested for the holiday. Composting also gives your tree a second life, feeding new growth in your garden and diverting waste from landfills. Christmas trees make for high-quality mulch and compost material, adding organic matter and nutrients to the soil as they break down, without increasing acidity.

Flocked trees cannot be composted or mulched.

How can someone mulch or compost their tree at home?

Louwers: Use loppers, hedge trimmers or a chainsaw to remove all limbs from the trunk. Run the material through a chipper, or chop it down as small as possible for compost, and mix it with your other composted material.

For mulch, chop up everything—bigger nuggets last longer—and spread it for long-lasting weed suppression that looks great.

Master Gardeners of Orange County is a program offered through the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Visit mgorange.ucanr.edu for information. Email gardening questions to occeocmghotline@ucanr.edu.

Curbside pickup

Check with your local waste hauler for information on their tree recycling services.

CR&R

crwasteservices.com

Republic Services

republicservices.com

Waste Management

wm.com

Heart-leaved penstemon,
Keckiella cordifolia

Go from blah to beautiful.

Tustin couple turns humdrum lawn into an enticing oasis.

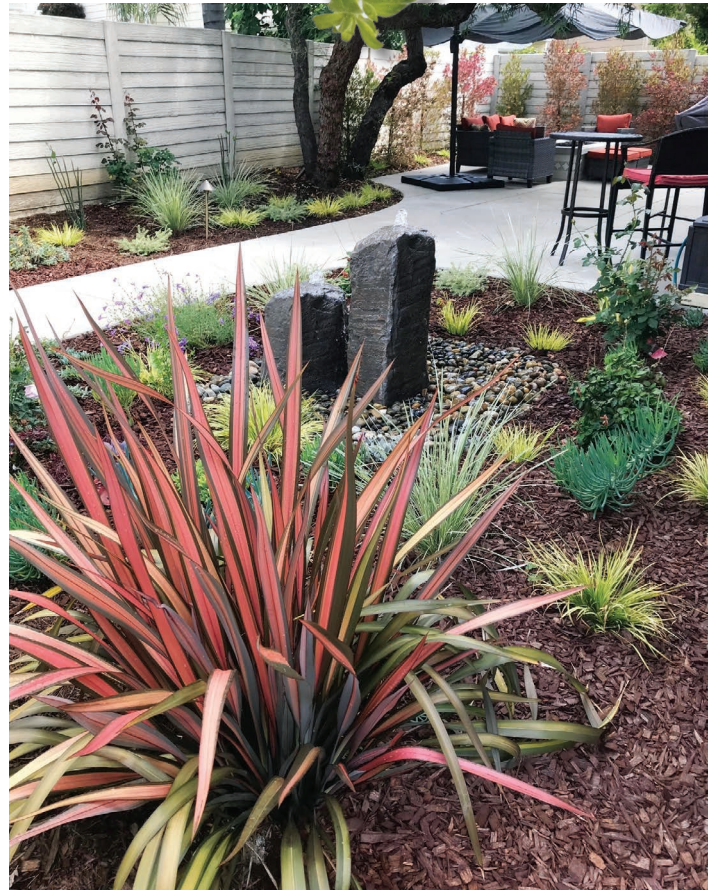
After 35 years of parenting and grandparenting, the Hays' home was best described as well-loved. A wooden deck was rotting away, and the lawn sat unused and uninviting.



Committed to making the most of their home in the years ahead, the Tustin couple reinvented their yard to make lounging out back their favorite place to be.

“The online rebate application makes it really easy,” Linda Hay said. “You can track the progress of your application and IRWD does a great job of keeping you in the loop and helping you along the way.”

They used California native plants as the focal point of their new landscape. Hardscape features included a recirculating rock fountain that brings harmony to the landscape—doubling as a water source for birds and pollinators—and a fire pit to warm evening conversations with friends and family.



The new landscaping has reduced the couple's water consumption and their monthly water bill.

“Best of all,” Scott Hay said, “our family and friends like to come over more often to enjoy our beautiful backyard.”

IRWD offers a rebate of \$5 for every square foot of turf you remove from your yard and replace with a water-efficient landscape. Find out more at [IRWD.com/rebates](https://www.irwd.com/rebates).



Juan's tip of the season.

Prune trees while dormant.

Pruning is a science and an art. It slows growth, but also changes the shape and appearance of a plant. Tree pruning is best during the dormant season, winter, before buds break in spring. No more than a third of a tree's live branches should be removed during any pruning cycle. A typical pruning cycle for a shade tree is three years. Make sure to follow the Three D Rule: remove Dead, Damaged and Diseased branches. Make sure your tools are clean and sharp.

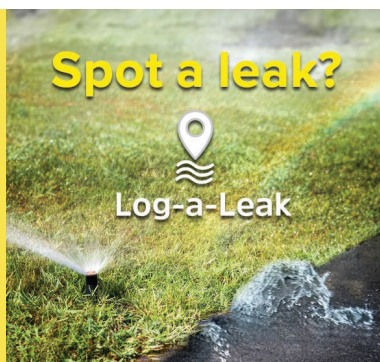


Looking ahead.

Your garden to-do list.

- **Sprinkler checkup:** Turn on sprinklers one station at a time and take notes on issues to fix. Apply to have IRWD pay half the cost of professional repairs at IRWD.com/spinklerrepair.
- **Mulch:** Weed your planter beds after a good rain. Lay three to four sheets of newspaper on the ground and cover with 3 or more inches of mulch to suppress weeds.
- **Plants:** This is a great time to plant bare-root trees and bushes. Fertilize citrus trees in January or February just prior to bloom.

Help identify outdoor leaks in your community.



Ever notice water leaking from an outdoor water line or broken sprinkler? Do the neighborly thing! Just grab your phone, snap a pic, upload it to IRWD's new online Log-a-Leak tool at IRWD.com/logaleak, and leave the rest to us! IRWD will contact the responsible person to get it repaired.

Tap our online resources.

Visit IRWD.com/rebates for rebates to help offset the cost of turf removal, weather-based irrigation controllers, efficient sprinkler heads, drip kits and more. Plus, check out our plant database at IRWD.com/plantlist.

Need to contact IRWD?

Customer Service: 949-453-5300

Email: CustomerService@IRWD.com

Website: IRWD.com

Join the conversation on social media

