



## Perris News

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### EMWD Unveils Water-Wise Demonstration Garden

Perris-based Eastern Municipal Water District unveils its "water-wise demonstration garden" to the public Saturday as the municipal utility continues its efforts to encourage water conservation by using drought-resistant plants, artificial turf and rock landscaping.

The public is invited to view and ask questions about the test garden from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at EMWD Headquarters, 2270 Trumble Road, just off Highway 74.

"We want to be good stewards of the water supply and we want to teach others how to do the same," said Peter Odencrans, EMWD Senior Public Affairs Officer. "This is the best alternative to ensure lush landscaping regardless of water restrictions.

Odencrans said EMWD spent \$288,000 to plant the garden, which took more than a year to install and will not be fully completed until all the plants mature, which could take months or even years.



Peter Odencrans, senior public affairs officer for Eastern Municipal Water District, strolls the water-wise garden planted at utility headquarters.



Public affairs officer Roxanne Rountree shows off water-wise ground cover, including Bush Lantana (foreground) and agave (background).

The utility expects to recover the cost of planting within nine years, thanks to greatly reduced irrigation and maintenance costs. Water usage dropped almost 90 percent—from about 10 million to 1 million gallons annually—when drought-resistant "California friendly" plants took root.

Odencrans said drought-resistant plants include agave, gum trees, India Hawthorn, Firethorn, Society Garlic, Prostrate Acacia and Texas Ranger. EMWD also employed river rock, decomposed granite, boulders and synthetic turf helped replace the old sod.

Most water-resistant plants can be purchased at home supply centers or nurseries.

While many home owners associations currently frown on artificial turf for lawns and common areas, Odencrans said EMWD is working with them to loosen restrictions on synthetic ground cover.

Public Affairs Officer Roxanne Rountree said EMWD replaced 57 acres of grass with the multi-faceted garden.

"It offers versatility and color and allows people to live within their water budget," she said.

EMWD recommends people interested in learning more about water conservation visit [www.usewaterwisely.org](http://www.usewaterwisely.org) and [www.emwd.org](http://www.emwd.org)