YOUR GARDEN

Your garden is a window into the natural world on your own property. Gardens and landscaping provide us with beauty, solitude, wildlife, fragrance, and even food. How we design, plant, and maintain our landscaping is an important part of being an environmental steward. Landscapes play a critical role in water conservation, water quality, and protecting wildlife.

Irrigation accounts for about 70% of the total water used at a typical single-family home. As water becomes more precious in a drier climate, landscapes offer opportunities to use water efficiently and conserve.

What you put on your landscape matters. When water runs off a landscape from improper irrigation or rain, it can take pollutants with it. Fertilizers, pesticides, pet waste, and debris are easily picked up by flowing water and can affect water quality in creeks and the ocean.

It’s common to see wildlife intermingle with the built environment in Malibu. Whether you choose plants favorable to pollinators or eliminate poisons, your garden can help protect Malibu’s wild beauty by mimicking natural habitats.
Design diversion terraces, swales, or berms that allow runoff to be filtered through vegetation and soil. Apply Ocean Friendly Garden principles to slow, spread, and sink rainwater. Malibu’s Landscape Water Conservation Ordinance outlines the rules for projects. For information, visit MalibuCity.org/Landscaping.

- Get a City permit for installing plants that will exceed 6 ft. in height, landscaping ≥2,500 sq. ft. on existing developed property, or landscaping ≥500 sq. ft. on new development.
- Schedule any grading and excavation projects during dry weather.
- Redirect downspouts away from paved surfaces to your garden or into a rain barrel or cistern.
- Install a graywater system, rain barrels, or a cistern. Reuse water to irrigate.
- Set aside an area to compost. It provides the best soil for gardening.
- Visit SoCalWaterSmart.com for available rebates.

**PLANTS & SOIL**

Healthy, living soil is the foundation of any garden. Choosing the right plants will ensure your landscape flourishes.

- Replace grass with natives and drought-tolerant plants. Save time and money by watering less.
- Go organic. Try non-toxic fertilizers like compost or worm tea.
- Prevent erosion. To slow evaporation and enrich the soil, spread mulch or plant fast-growing groundcover.
- Group plants with similar watering needs together to irrigate efficiently.

**IRRIGATION**

More is not always better when it comes to irrigation. Water efficiently and watch your garden thrive while conserving water, preventing pollution, and lowering your water bill.

- Use a smart irrigation controller.
- Do not overwater. Use drip irrigation or micro-spray systems to water plants, trees, and shrubs.
- Direct sprinklers away from streets and hard surfaces to prevent runoff.
- Adjust irrigation timers seasonally. Check for leaks, overspray, and broken sprinklers.
- Reset your irrigation controller after power outages.

**MAINTENANCE**

Proper maintenance practices make your landscape sustainable. By avoiding chemicals, preventing runoff, and fixing equipment, you play a part in keeping Malibu wild, clean, and beautiful.

- Use organic/non-toxic fertilizers. Compost and worm tea are great for the environment.
- Do not apply fertilizers or pesticides near storm drains or within 48 hours before or after rain.
- Use alternatives to chemical pesticides by following an Integrated Pest Management approach.
- Check and repair outdoor hoses and connectors.
- Equip hoses with automatic shut-off nozzles to conserve water.
- Sweep up the green. Do not blow or hose yard waste into the street. Clippings clog storm drains, generate bacteria, and wash into the ocean.
- Aerate soil in spring and fall to allow water and nutrients to soak in.
- Grass recycle. Leaving clippings on the lawn reduces water needs.
- Store materials (pesticides, fertilizers, pool chemicals) in a covered area like a garage or shed.
- Protect stockpiles of materials from wind and rain by storing them under a tarp.

Keep It Clean, Malibu