

The Surfrider Foundation is giving the acronym CPR new meaning: Conservation, Permeability, and Retention. In an effort to make the public aware of fundamental tools to improve our watershed the Ojai Valley Green Coalition has partnered with the Surfrider Foundation to disseminate the pertinent local information contained in their brochure called “Ocean Friendly Gardens.”

The advice listed in their guide applies to our inland areas as well with the complex series of streams and barrancas that cover our valley. These waterways that may run dry in times of drought, function as channels to fill our rivers and replenish our groundwater table in times of heavy rains. Many of those channels lead directly to Lake Casitas, a major source of drinking water, or on to the Ventura River which empties into the Pacific Ocean.

The foundation’s CPR points can help Ojai reduce its run-off, increasing and improving our water supply, as well as purifying the water that does escape.

Conservation:

- Plant a tree- Trees slow wind and water erosion, regulate temperature and, once established, many don’t require supplemental water. A local organization Ojai Trees can select the correct tree or trees for your yard and help plant them, contact them at: ojaitree@sbcglobal.net
- Use grass sparingly-Use it only to extend your living areas and nowhere else. Try removing a little at a time by replacing it with drought-resistant and native species, surrounded by gravel or mulch.
- Diversify plantings- This will discourage pests and lower the need for fertilizer. Remember to group your plants according to water needs. There are excellent sources of natives at both Mountain Meadows nursery and Desert Images.
- Eco Pest control- Use plants to attract beneficial insects and non-toxic home remedies. Ladybugs can be the solution to stubborn aphids and are available at local gardening centers.
- Mulch it- Chunks of bark, peat moss or gravel slow evaporation. Low cost mulch is available at the green waste recycling center on Old Baldwin Rd. and gravel is available locally at Ojai lumber
- Water in the early morning to reduce evaporation and use less on cooler, overcast days, replace sprinklers with low volume emitters where possible and shut off automatic sprinklers in the rainy season. Aqua-Flo Supply, a local irrigation business, is an excellent source for information and equipment to update your watering system. Outdoor watering accounts for 30-70% of household use.
- Sweep instead of hosing or blowing off driveway and patio areas.

Permeability

- Create contours- Aesthetically pleasing, irregular ground surfaces will capture more groundwater by forming small dips and obstacles where the water can pool, resting until it is absorbed slowly.
- permeate with pavers instead of solid concrete. Use spaced pavers with gravel, decomposed granite, or other permeable materials that allow drainage and discourage run-off. Driveways, patios and walkways make good permeable projects.

Retention

- Dig deep and create an infiltration basin. A basin is typically built in the lowest point in the garden and is designed to capture and retain rainwater, allowing it to infiltrate soil slowly.
- Design a rooftop, rainwater collection system meant to capture water that would normally run off.
- Fill in rills and gullies that are signs of fast moving run-off and erosion. Fill in these sources of water with gravel to stop or slow the flow.

For more on Ocean Friendly Gardens visit: www.surfrider.org/ofg

For more eco-friendly water and gardening tips visit: www.bewaterwise.com