

## **Blue Thumb Neighbors--Rosemont**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**April 28, 2011**

#### **What is Blue Thumb Neighbors?**

- Blue Thumb Neighbors is a free program designed to help residents create beautiful, River-Friendly Landscapes that benefit both the environment and each neighbor's pocketbook.

#### **What is River Friendly Landscaping?**

- River Friendly landscaping is a holistic approach to sustainable landscaping that uses resources, like water, efficiently and incorporates practices that foster soil health, reduce waste and prevent pollution of our air and waterways. It provides easy steps for creating healthy, beautiful landscapes while protecting and caring for our environment.

#### **What are the benefits of River-Friendly Landscaping?**

- Saves you money on water, fertilizers and pesticides
- Requires less maintenance such as mowing and trimming
- Reduces green waste in your landscape
- Attracts birds, butterflies, and other beneficial insects, like ladybugs to your garden
- Conserves landfill space because of the reduced green waste
- Reduces air pollution by reducing the amount of green waste that needs to be transported
- Improves water quality by reducing the amount of polluted water that goes into the storm drain then into our creeks and rivers

#### **Where can I see examples of sustainable landscapes?**

- **River Friendly Landscaping** Web site at: <http://www.riverfriendly.org>
- **Be Water Smart** Web site at:  
<http://www.bewatersmart.info/water-smart-gardening/water-wise-gardening/>

#### **What will participating households receive?**

- **Free** at-home consultation on efficient watering.
- **Free** training and advice from professional landscapers, garden and irrigation experts at educational workshops
- **Free** landscaping kits loaded with educational literature, tips and techniques to make your yard a healthier place for plants, kids and pets
- One lucky participant will receive a free weather-based irrigation controller, compliments of California American Water

#### **What are some of the topics participants will learn?**

- How to create a healthy, beautiful, low-maintenance landscape that compliments your home and neighborhood
- How to read your landscape and make practical design decisions for your property
- Proper irrigation scheduling—when and how much to water for healthy plants
- How to match your irrigation to your soil and plant type
- How to select high-impact, low-fuss plants appropriate for your specific growing conditions
- How to maintain your landscape to protect your investment while caring for our environment

## How does the program work?

Each neighbor agrees to:

- 1) Participate in one at-home consultation on efficient watering in May/June (sponsored by California American Water). During this one-hour consultation, participants will receive assistance with checking their irrigation system for water leaks and advice on scheduling.
- 2) Participate in three educational workshops **at the UC Cooperative Extension Auditorium at 4145 Branch Center Road.**
  - **Thursday, June 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m.:** Sustainable Landscape Design
  - **Thursday, June 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m.:** Efficient Watering
  - **Thursday, June 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m.:** Right Plant, Right Place
- 3) Fill out simple surveys on your own landscape care before and after the program.
- 4) Consider taking part in an optional media event to promote and celebrate Rosemont's participation in the project.

## Does it cost anything to participate in Blue Thumb Neighbors?

- This program is **offered at NO CHARGE** to Rosemont residents.

## What is included in the at-home consultation on efficient watering?

The at-home consultation on efficient watering, sponsored by California American Water and performed by trained irrigation experts, identifies potential water savings at your property. The visit typically takes about an hour and consists of the following:

- Review the irrigation/watering system for broken sprinklers, inefficiencies such as tilt heads and overspray.
- Conduct a "catch can test" to determine the irrigation system's output for use in developing a suggested watering schedule.
- Note soil type, plant type, plant density, micro-climate, etc.
- Determine the homeowner's current water use, provide a suggested watering schedule and estimate the amount of water that could be saved using the recommended watering schedule.
- Explain the findings and recommendations to the homeowner.
- Provide training, if applicable, on how to use the irrigation controller.

## Does Blue Thumb Neighbors advocate complete removal of turf and lawn?

- Blue Thumb Neighbors focuses on helping participants make informed decisions about using turf and lawn in landscaping, including proper irrigation scheduling and turf alternatives.

## How can neighbors participate?

- Contact Christine Kohn, Blue Thumb Neighbors Program Coordinator, by phone: 916-944-1631 or via e-mail: ckohn@INCommunications.biz.
- Participation is limited and will be determined on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Where can I find out more information about Blue Thumb Neighbors--Rosemont?**

- At the Rosemont Community Association Web site: RosemontCA.org
- Rosemont Patch Article: Rosemont Selected for 'Blue Thumb' Sustainable Landscaping Program <http://rosemont.patch.com/articles/rosemont-selected-for-blue-thumb-water-conservation-program-video>
- By contacting Blue Thumb Neighbors Program Coordinator Christine Kohn at 916-944-1631 or [ckohn@INCommunications.biz](mailto:ckohn@INCommunications.biz).

**Who is sponsoring Blue Thumb Neighbors?**

- Blue Thumb Neighbors is offered in partnership with the Rosemont Community Association. It is sponsored by the Regional Water Authority, River Friendly Landscaping Coalition and California American Water. It is funded by a federal grant.

**What is the Regional Water Authority (RWA)?**

- RWA represents 21 water providers in Sacramento, Placer and El Dorado counties, plus the city of West Sacramento. You can learn more about RWA and its Water Efficiency Program at [BeWaterSmart.info](http://BeWaterSmart.info).

**What is the River Friendly Landscaping Coalition (RFL)?**

- RFL is a collaboration between public agencies, non-profit organizations, designers, private landscape architects and contractors in the greater Sacramento region. You can learn more about River Friendly Landscaping at [RiverFriendly.org](http://RiverFriendly.org).

**How was Rosemont selected?**

- Program sponsors nominated neighborhoods from throughout the Sacramento area to participate in the program.
- Nominated neighborhoods were reviewed according to 13 criteria, which included whether the neighborhood is metered and representative of other communities in the Sacramento region.
- After interviews with leaders at top-ranked neighborhoods, the program sponsors selected Rosemont.

**Why was Rosemont selected?**

After talking with RCA leaders:

- Program sponsors were especially impressed with Rosemont's sense of community pride, existing system of communication via the Web site and other outreach avenues, as well as enthusiasm of community leaders for the program.
- Rosemont was the only neighborhood selected in unincorporated Sacramento County for the 2011 Blue Thumb Neighbors program.

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