



# Water Views

December 2009

*"A District of Distinction"*  
Serving the Public - Respecting the Environment

## Sometimes the Grass Really is Greener

Bonnie Trussell loves her beautiful green lawn. It looks perfect every day, never needs to be watered and Bonnie doesn't need to pay a gardener to care for it.

"My synthetic turf looks and feels like real grass," says Bonnie Trussell, a Mission Viejo resident who installed synthetic turf almost three years ago. "I love it. It's easy to walk on and comfortable to sit on and it requires almost no maintenance."

Bonnie joins a growing number of south Orange County homeowners who have decided to transition from grass to synthetic turf. Among the biggest reasons for the transition include the scarcity of potable water and a commitment to water conservation.



ETWD resident, Bonnie Trussell and her synthetic turf.

"Many customers are looking for new ways to conserve water and reduce their water bill," shares Mike King, Customer Service Manager for El Toro Water District (ETWD). "Artificial or synthetic turf can be a great alternative to natural grass."

After installing the turf, Bonnie's water consumption was 18,000 gallons less per year, which resulted in financial savings on her monthly water bill. Bonnie also received a \$250 rebate for practicing water conservation and installing synthetic turf through programs promoted by ETWD.

In addition, some customers aren't physically able to continue to care for their landscape anymore. Synthetic turf is a wonderful solution for them because it requires little if any maintenance.

"I am 82 years old and I'm busy! I volunteer at Saddleback Memorial Medical Center four days a week, which I've been doing for the past 18 years. I also enjoy visiting with friends and spending time with my children and grandchildren," explains Bonnie. "I don't want to mow my lawn anymore."

Before installing synthetic turf, please check with your homeowner's association and/or city for regulations. For more information about water conservation and synthetic turf rebate programs, please visit [www.bewaterwise.com](http://www.bewaterwise.com) or contact Customer Service at 949.837.0660.

## IN THIS ISSUE

Sometimes the Grass Really is Greener	1
Employee Recognition	2
Fall/Winter Outdoor Watering	2
Water Conservation Corner	3
Water Education Corner	4

## El Toro Water District Recognizes Dedicated and Distinguished Employee

El Toro Water District (ETWD) is pleased to recognize Operations Foreman, Ronald Hightower, and his 30-years of dedication and service to the community.

As Operations Foreman, Ron is responsible for overseeing and inspecting all repairs to the District's infrastructure, in order to reliably meet the needs of the District's 51,000 customers. He was the first employee at ETWD to receive his California Department of Public Health (CDPH) D-5 Water Distribution Certificate (D-5 is the highest level). He also holds a CDPH T-3 Water Treatment Certificate.

Ron is an integral part of the community events that ETWD attends. He enjoys interacting with the public and has participated in public speaking engagements regarding "Water Emergency Preparedness".

"Ron is considered a core part of El Toro Water District," shares Mike Grandy, Assistant General Manager for the District. "He's been with us since the beginning and has contributed tremendously to ensuring residents and businesses get water efficiently."

He began his career as an employee of the Laguna Hills Water and Sanitation Company before ETWD purchased the assets in 1983. Back then, houses in the region were still being built and his job was to respond to house calls for various repairs. Since then, Ron has been instrumental in developing a comprehensive maintenance program in which proactive and preventative steps are taken to avert water conveyance malfunctions.

Over the years Ron has actively participated in mutual aid to other water districts in time of need. He was sent to the site of the Northridge earthquake to assist with the maintenance and repair of water and sewer lines. He also assisted the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, as well as the City of Laguna Beach during the fires of 1993.

Ron's commitment to sound operating practices has contributed to the District's honor of being awarded the District of Distinction accreditation given by the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF). The District of Distinction is one of the most prestigious awards in local government in the State of California.



Ron Hightower (left) talks with water customers at the South County Disaster Preparedness Expo

## Cooler Temperatures = Less Water for Landscapes

*November 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010*  
*Water landscape once a week*

Fall and winter typically brings cooler temperatures and changes in water conservation prohibitions. According to the Level 1 Mandatory Water Conservation Measures implemented by ETWD this past July, customers need to strive to reduce outdoor watering to one day per week during the cooler months of November through March.

For many customers, this watering reduction will be a substantial change from the three days per week watering schedule in place for the summer months.

Approximately 70 percent of the total water used by southern California homeowners is used outside the home. Luckily, managing outdoor water use is one of the easiest



places to practice conservation and save money. The cooler fall and winter months are an ideal time to reduce water use outside of the home. Lower temperatures mean that landscape requires less water.

ETWD imports nearly 100% of its water supply from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). Effective July 1, 2009, MWD recently imposed water allocations which required ETWD to follow suit and implement a water allocation plan. As a result and to encourage efficient water usage, ETWD also implemented Permanent

### Mandatory Water Conservation

Measures to guide customers on water usage.

Under these measures, watering or irrigating your lawn or landscape while it is raining is prohibited. We encourage our customers to stay in tune with weather patterns, and if rain is suspected, to turn sprinklers off. Customers who adjust their irrigation systems to reflect the weather enjoy conservation benefits and save money.

# Water Conservation Corner

## Single Family Residential Rebate Program



El Toro Water District (ETWD) encourages its customers to install water-saving devices. Single-family residential customers can apply for rebates on high-efficiency clothes washers, high-efficiency toilets, weather based irrigation controllers, rotating nozzles and synthetic turf. ETWD is matching the synthetic turf rebate amount for ETWD customers. On September 21, 2009, a new rebate program went into effect and single family residents no longer require an on-line reservation. An application, along with a copy of your recent water bill, and the original receipt from the purchase of the qualifying fixture, appliance or device must be postmarked within 45 days after purchase. Rebates are limited. For rebate application and more information, please visit [www.socalwatersmart.com](http://www.socalwatersmart.com).

## Multi-Family & Commercial Rebate Program



Rebates for qualifying toilets, urinals, food steamers, ice machines, select HVAC equipment, dry vacuum pumps, steam sterilizer retrofits, water-brooms, irrigation controllers, rotating nozzles, synthetic turf and clothes washers(multi-family only) are available for multi-family and commercial customers. On September 21, 2009, a new rebate program went into effect and a rebate reservation must be made using the online reservation system. Participants must obtain a rebate reservation for the qualifying device PRIOR to purchase and installation. The application, original receipt and supporting documentation must be postmarked within 45 days of reservation confirmation. Rebates are limited. On-line rebate reservations and more information can be found at [www.mwdsaveabuck.com](http://www.mwdsaveabuck.com).

## Indoor Water Saving Tips

1. Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth, washing your face, or shaving. Saves 2 gallons per minute.
2. Take 5 minute or less showers. Saves 2.5 gallons per minute.
3. Check for toilet leaks. Place a drop of food dye or dye tablet in the toilet tank and wait five to ten minutes. If the dye comes into the bowl, you have a leak.
4. Run dishwasher only when it's full. Saves 3 gallons per load.
5. Wash full loads of laundry. Saves 15 gallons per load.
6. Turn off water when washing dishes by hand.
7. Install new high-efficiency toilets. Saves 38 gallons per toilet, per day.
8. Install new low-flow shower heads. Save 20 gallons per day.
9. Repair leaky faucets. One drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons per year.
10. Retrofit faucets to include an aerator with flow restriction.
11. Instead of running the tap for a cold glass of water, fill a pitcher and store it in the refrigerator to keep cold water on hand at all times.
12. Clean vegetables by filling a large bowl with rinse water instead of leaving the faucet running. Saves 2+ gallons per minute.
13. While waiting for the water to heat up, capture the cold water in a bucket or pitcher and use it to water plants or wash fruits and vegetables. Save 2+ gallons per minute.

## Water Education Corner



# WILEY WANTS YOU TO JOIN THE WATER HERO TEAM!

Hey kids! Wiley Water Hero needs your help in conserving Orange County's most precious resource - water.

**Do you think you could pledge to save 20 gallons of water a day?** If so, then are you ready to join the coolest team in town? It's simple, just visit [www.ocwaterhero.com](http://www.ocwaterhero.com) and click on "I want to be a water hero!" tab.

Once you officially pledge to save water, we will send you a water hero kit to help with your water saving duties. Your kit will be filled with lots of cool prizes like: a water hero badge, "fix-it" tickets, a shower timer, a flying disk and more!



Your duties as a water hero are to teach your family and friends how to save water every day. If you get your parents to pledge to save water, you can become a water SUPERhero and get even more cool prizes!

Brought to you by Orange County Water District, Municipal Water District of Orange County  
and the family of Orange County water agencies.

The El Toro Water District is a California Water District governed by an elected Board of Directors.



### EL TORO WATER DISTRICT

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The Mission of the El Toro Water District is to plan and invest appropriately to provide its customers a safe, adequate and reliable supply of water, wastewater and recycled water service in an environmentally and economically responsible way.

**Water Views** is published quarterly to keep water users in the El Toro Water District informed about water and wastewater related issues and events and is prepared by District staff.

**Your comments and suggestions are welcome.**

Please call Customer Service at (949) 837-0660 or visit our website at [www.etwd.com](http://www.etwd.com).

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