



WALTER ANDERSEN NURSERY™

# Garden Talk

SAN DIEGO'S GARDEN RESOURCE

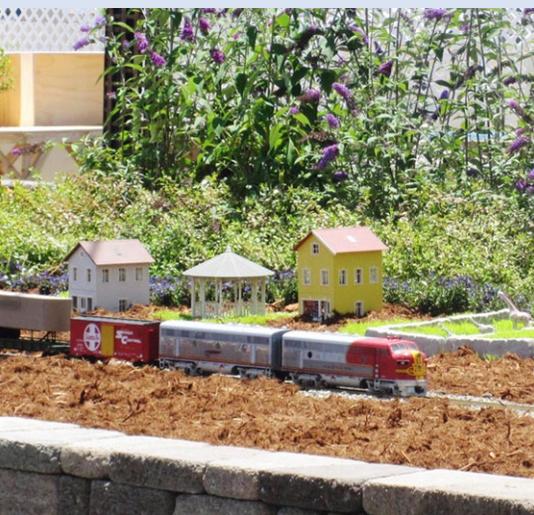
San Diego's Independent Nursery Since 1928™

JULY 2015

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## Come See Our County Fair Display



There's still time to see the San Diego County Fair where, once again, we have a display. We are featuring a train making a loop around a stand of Buddleia. ●



## Sprinkler Conversion Is A Great Option For Living With Water Restrictions

By Ken Andersen



A month or so ago with the water restrictions looming, I weighed some options for my home landscape. Rather than removing the hybrid Bermuda lawn, a grass that is drought and heat tolerant, I researched the City of San Diego water restrictions to see what I would be facing. The restrictions noted that stream rotor sprinklers are exempt

from the five minute duration rule but still subject to the two times per week rule. Stream rotor sprinklers emit the water in streams of various reach. Such sprinklers are more efficient because water is emitted where it is needed and there is less lost to wind and evaporation. They are manufactured by the major irrigation component

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## Lifesaver Plant Is Fun For All Ages

By Melanie Potter

Don't blame the kids, they didn't do it. I know it looks like somebody glued Lifesaver candies to this plant, but Mother Nature did it all on her own. It's just how a *Huernia zebrina* (zebrina meaning zebra-striped) is supposed to look. Also called Lifesaver plant because that's what this member of the milkweed family resembles. It's neither a cactus nor succulent despite the leaves resembling cactus spines.

It's also fun for all ages to grow.

Flowers are yellow and star fished shaped, striped with fine, reddish colored lines like a zebra and sport a big red lifesaver-like candy in the middle.

They can be grown outdoors in warm winter or Mediterranean climates like ours. They are native to deserts from



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## Sprinkler Conversion continued from p1

companies in various configurations and adjustability. Rainbird, Hunter (a local company), and Toro all make them. For my situation, Rainbird fit the bill. I purchased enough sprinkler heads to replace all of the sprinklers on my back lawn and took a weekend to unscrew the old heads and replace them with the new ones. After six weeks, and operating under the mandatory restrictions, I am happy to report that my water usage has been reduced and the lawn looks better than it has in a long time! The sprinkler heads are also eligible for a rebate to help offset the cost.

I was so pleased with the performance of the stream rotor sprinklers that I am converting as much of the landscaping as I can to these. Hunter makes stream rotor heads that are a direct replacement for Toro and Rainbird pop up sprinkler bodies. Retrofitting existing heads is more economical than replacing the entire head. A little research is needed on your part to make sure that retrofitting will work. Sometimes head spacing will be different, or the area you need to irrigate may be too shallow to use these heads. In landscaped areas of your yard, consider switching over to drip irrigation or micro sprinklers. These systems are also exempt from the five minute duration and will put the water right where it is needed with little wasted. Both of our stores sell DIG irrigation products and you can pick up a free planning guide to tailor a system for your needs.

Remember, if you do decide to remove your lawn completely; try to wait until fall when the weather cools and new plantings will require less water. Anything you replace your lawn with will require adequate water to become established and in some cases, in the short term, this will require as much or possibly more water than what an established lawn would require. That is, unless you replace your lawn with artificial turf. However, even that is not the perfect solution in some cases. Remember it will wear out, it can mat down quickly in high traffic areas, and it can get very hot in the summer. Also, if you have a tree in your lawn that you wish to keep after the sod is removed, make sure you have a way to get the needed irrigation to the tree. Trees typically live off the water applied to the lawn, so once you remove the lawn you also take away the tree's water supply. I have helped customers who have removed lawns only to see their mature trees slowly die due to lack of water. I have also seen cases where areas of artificial turf had to be replaced with plants to insure that the trees did not suffer.

Remember, there are a lot of solutions and water restrictions do not mean our landscapes have to die. Landscapes are a good thing and provide ecosystems for animals as well as oxygen for us. Research the options for your yard, consider all of the costs and savings, and adapt to the situation at hand. For irrigation assistance follow this link, [www.facebook.com/gardentalkdavidross?fref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/gardentalkdavidross?fref=ts). •

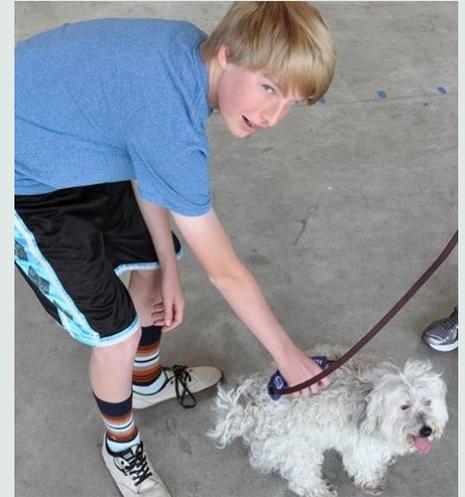
## Pruning A Coral Tree

By Walter Andersen, Jr.

We would like to remind you how and why to trim a Coral Tree. The wood is soft and holds a lot of water, and with all the foliage, the branches can get too heavy to support all the weight and the tree can break. Branches fall off, or worse, the whole tree will just fall apart! Many Coral Trees are planted

on or near lawn areas and take up a lot of water and grow fast during summer months. To be safe, trim off 5' to 8' feet of the new growth. By doing this, you will probably remove most of the foliage, but it will start new growth in just a few weeks. No need to put sealer on the cuts, they will heal. •

## Happy New Home, Norman!



*Norman was adopted.*

**Our first pet adoption event with the San Diego Humane Society didn't showcase many pets looking for homes, but we did see one little fellow adopted and leave with his new forever family!**



*Simba is truly a gentle giant.*

**Held on May 31, there were only three dogs available. Simba, of course, you are familiar with as we have been helping promote his need for a home. However, it was Norman who went home with some regular customers. It was a happy beginning for Norman who, due to his deafness, had challenges attracting an adoptive family. •**

## Lifesaver Plant continued from p1



Southern and East Africa to Arabia, which is helpful to remember when deciding where to plant them. They will prefer warmer, dryer climates, so be wary of their environment outside. In their natural setting, they grow underneath taller plants that shade them from sun. They will need to be placed in bright light or partial shade otherwise the foliage risks severe sunburn brought on from a survival tactic that allows them to develop a protective red/purple pigmentation that scalds the stems.

Plant it like you would a succulent or cactus—in well-draining soil and let dry between watering.

During the growing season, high-phosphorous, low nitrogen fertilizers can be applied at half-strength once a month. Alternatively, blood meal and bone meal can be mixed into potting soil in small amounts at the beginning of the growing season. No fertilizers should be given during the dormant season.

These plants are prone to mealy bug attacks, so watch for such pests and treat appropriately.

Finally, I have to confess that this plant brought back childhood memories and reminded me of my dad, who always had a roll of Lifesavers (butterscotch or cherry flavored) tucked in his pocket. I haven't eaten a Lifesaver for decades, unless you count the mini bag of gummy Lifesavers I tore into at Halloween, which does not make for a warm stroll down memory lane. Given that bout of nostalgia, I'm not sure the summer will pass without me adding this fun plant to the household. •

WALTER ANDERSEN NURSERY'S OWN



**Choose Locally-Grown Flowers and Vegetables for Your Garden. Look for 1st Prize Plants at WAN!**

## TO DO LIST: July



### FERTILIZE

For lawns, use Marathon Fertilizer for fall fescue, and Hi-Yield Weed & Feed to feed grass and control broad-leaf weeds. Feed ornamentals with Gro-Power. Feed Vegetables with Gro-Power Tomato and Vegetable Food or Dr. Earth Organic Tomato and Vegetable Food. Feed Citrus, Avocado, and Fruit Trees with Gro-Power Citrus and Avocado Food. Feed Palms and Tropicals with Gro-Power Palm Tree and Tropical Food. Add Ada Perry's Magic Formula to your regular rose feeding schedule. Mulch plants to conserve water and dress up planting beds.

### WATER

Through October, keep a close watch on watering to make sure plants do not suffer from drought. Adjust sprinkler clocks or provide supplemental watering to avoid stress to plants. Make sure lawn sprinklers are working properly to prevent runoff.

### PRUNE

Walter Jr. would like to remind you how and why to trim a Coral Tree. See story and tips on page 2.

### PLANT

Anything! Just make sure it gets plenty of water when it is hot. Smaller root systems will require more frequent, shallower waterings than established plants.

### LOOK FOR

Plumeria, Hibiscus, Lantana, Plumbago, Gardenias, and bedding plants. •

— **Rose Sale** —  
**50% OFF**  
**ROSES**

*Excludes Carpet Roses*

## Water Restrictions Effects On The Nursery

By Ken Andersen



With mandatory cut backs in water use imposed due to the drought, we have had some inquiries as to what the nursery is doing to comply.

Our stores fall under two different water authorities, San Diego and Poway, and the restrictions are similar but not the same. One thing we have always done at both stores is hand water. This allows us to put the water directly where it is needed and minimizes run off which is another issue both stores contend with. We have never used overhead sprinklers. Even though the savings in labor would be huge, we could never justify its inefficiency. The Poway store, because of its size, its location and warmer weather, and the amount of landscaped area uses more water than the other store. In the landscaped areas in front of the store, gear rotor sprinklers water the lawn areas twice a week. Landscaped planters to the west are on gear rotor sprinklers as well. These are more efficient than spray type sprinklers. We have reduced watering the planters in the middle of the parking lot to twice per week. Should those areas need additional water, we will do so by hand

within the guidelines. The planters at the front of the store have also been cut to twice per week. The main planter was mulched with shredded redwood to conserve more water. Converting these planters to stream rotor sprinklers is under consideration as that is more efficient. The planter that is in front of the containers is mostly drought tolerant plants and cactus but will undergo additional landscaping to save water. All runoff from irrigating our bedding tables is vacuumed up to keep it from entering the storm drains. Once the water is picked up, it is transported to various planters in the front of the nursery and used to provide water as needed. The amount of slower moving plant inventory in both locations will be reduced which means there will be fewer plants to water.

An important realization is that complying with water restrictions doesn't mean you must let your landscape and grass die. There are a number of solutions that can be used. Also, do not make hasty decisions when it comes to your landscape. If you decide you want to remove your lawn,

it would be best to wait until fall to do so unless you are going to replace with artificial turf. If you replant in the hotter summer months you will have to water the new plants, even if they are drought tolerant, frequently to get them established. Taking advantage of the cooler weather in the fall is much better and plants will require less water to get them established. If you decide to replace your lawn with artificial turf and you have a tree in the area, be sure to make some kind of arrangement for watering the tree (or plants). We have seen trees suffer and die when artificial turf has been installed as their water source has been removed.

If you have questions we are here to help. From drip irrigation, to mulch, to drought tolerant and native plants we can help you keep your yard looking beautiful even during the drought. •

## Save The Dates



**July 4: Independence Day**  
Both stores will be closed for the holiday.

**September 7: Labor Day**  
The Poway store will close at 5pm for Labor Day.

— **Rose Sale** —  
**50% OFF**  
**ROSES**

*Excludes Carpet Roses*

## Drought Has Lasting Impacts On Birds

By Garrison Frost, Director of Marketing and Communications Audubon California



**Note from Old Ben:** I would like to share this article by Garrison Frost, Audubon California's director of marketing and communications, about information on how birds are affected by the drought.

Severe drought conditions in California are impacting everything, including the birds. Even though we've received some rain we're still a long way from where we need to be. Nobody is heralding the end of the drought, yet! We've been speaking with our colleagues in the field over the last few weeks about the impact of the drought on birds, and have put together the following notes based on those conversations. This is by no means a comprehensive list of impacts, but it certainly covers some of the bigger issues.

### Wetland Birds at Risk

California has lost a great deal of wetland habitat over the years, making the small amount of habitat that remains all the more precious. In this drought, these remaining wetlands are getting even less water than usual. The rivers and streams that feed these wetlands are dry, and government allocations of water to wetland refuges (in the Central Valley, in particular) have been cut dramatically. New legislation introduced to Congress would cut these allocations even further.

Waterfowl that rely on these wetlands as staging grounds for migration, overwintering, or breeding, are finding fewer habitats than they need. Some birds will fly over and try to make their migration without stopping. Those that do stop will be forced to congregate in the limited areas where there's water, putting them at greater risk of disease. We've seen massive die-offs resulting from this type of crowding. Moreover,

food resources in these wetlands are also limited.

### Agricultural Habitat Also Limited

With natural wetlands going dry, many birds will try to make use of one of the few wet areas remaining; agricultural areas. Sadly, the crops that are getting prioritized for water (such as walnuts) aren't the ones that are the most hospitable to birds (such as rice or alfalfa).

The other drawback of birds being forced onto farmland are the inherent risks they face there. The best example of this is the Tricolored Blackbird, which we've been trying to encourage to make more use of natural habitat for breeding, because the farms this species choose are fraught with risk. Huge colonies of the bird make their nests in the wheat, but often their chicks aren't able to fledge before the farmer must harvest the field—resulting in huge losses.

### Salinity

The great saline lakes in California's interior (Mono Lake, Owens Lake, Salton Sea, for instance) host millions of shorebirds every spring during migration. The ecology of these places is incredibly delicate. The shortage of water will alter the salinity, which may prevent the water from sustaining the brine flies and shrimp and in turn provide less food for birds.

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## Old Ben's Specials

Valid July 1-31, 2015

*Old Ben's has the freshest seed in town. Direct from the mill to you. Freshness counts!*

### Nyger Seed

Nyger seed is the staple food for gold Finches and many other small finches.

**25lb. \$39.97** Reg. \$59.99

### No Mess Wild Bird Seed

*The no mess advantage:* Seed is hulled, will not sprout, birds can eat all the seed which attracts fewer feeder pest!

**20lb. \$24.97** Reg. \$42.99

### Old Ben's Hummingbird & Oriole Kits

*Everything you need in one package.* Feeder, food, ant barrier and cleaning brush.

**\$19.97** Reg. \$29.99

### 1950s Fashion Feeder

*New patterns and shapes!*

**\$17.47** Reg. \$34.99

### Spray Millet

*Grown on the Sacramento Delta.*

Seven sprays per bag. A Super treat for wild and domestic birds.

**\$7.97** Reg. \$10.99

### Alpaca Nesting Ball

Birds love the Alpaca fiber for insulating their nest from cold and rain.

**\$9.97** Reg. \$19.99

*All specials limited to stock on hand. No special orders. Cannot be combined with any other discount or offer.*

## Garden Classes

JULY

Saturday classes are **FREE** and last about an hour. Complimentary coffee is served. During inclement weather, classes are held indoors in San Diego and on the covered, heated patio in Poway. Topics are subject to change. See the full schedule at [www.walterandersen.com/calendar/](http://www.walterandersen.com/calendar/).

## SAN DIEGO | 9:00AM

7/4

No Class  
Store Closed

7/11

Summer Color!

7/18

Plumerias

7/25

Garden Trends Now!

## POWAY | 9:30AM

7/4

No Class  
Store Closed

7/11

Container Gardening with  
Carol Fuller

7/18

Summer Fruit Tree Pruning &  
Care with Richard Wright

7/25

Landscaping with Herbs

## July In-Store Specials!

Valid July 1-31, 2015

## Deciduous Fruit Trees

# 20% OFF

Includes Apples, Plums, Peaches, Nectarines & more!  
Excludes Citrus & Avocado

## All Roses 50% OFF

*Limited to stock on hand. No special orders. Cannot be combined with any other offer.  
Final sale. No coupon needed. Hedge Fund\$ certificates do apply.*

## Visit Our 2 Locations

**SAN DIEGO**

3642 Enterprise Street  
San Diego, California 92110  
{619} 224-8271

**POWAY**

12755 Danielson Court  
Poway, California 92064  
{858} 513-4900

**Old Ben** continued from p5**Speaking of Flies**

Many songbirds rely on flies and other bugs for food. Less water in the environment means lower hatching levels for these insects. This drop in insects can result from either less water or a reduction in flowering trees.

If you haven't noticed, most of our hills are still brown. Ranchers are reporting that grass isn't growing, and there's a real concern that we won't see the wildflowers bloom anywhere near their normal rate. This could impact all nectar-loving birds, such as hummingbirds. And less grass will be trouble for birds that nest in the grass.

**Long-Range Impacts of Drought**

"It can take a few years to really see the impact of drought. In most cases, birds don't just visibly die. Instead, they just don't reproduce, and you'll see the population levels decline for several years," said Audubon California's Coastal Stewardship Director Andrea Jones. •



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