

Garden for the Environment + SFPUC's
Introduction to Sustainable Gardening Series

The Introduction to Sustainable Gardening Series is a three-part workshop series designed to help transform a backyard into a thriving, sustainable garden. This course will teach the basics for planting and caring for a flourishing perennial garden that saves water and attracts pollinators and beneficial insects.

Workshop 1: Sustainable Garden Design

Workshop 2: Water-Wise Gardening

Workshop 3: Organic Pest Control

PART II: WATER-WISE GARDENING

Goal: Learn how to install plants and an irrigation system for a drought-tolerant garden.

Agenda

1. Introduction – 15 minutes
2. Lecture – 30 minutes
 - a. Soil and water needs of waterwise plants
 - b. Drip irrigation basics
3. Hands-on Practicum – 60 minutes
 - a. How to install plants
 - b. Plant the garden
 - c. Install irrigation
4. Closing and Q+A – 15 minutes

GFE will provide

- Books for students to browse when choosing plants (Plants and Landscapes for Summer Dry Climates, Sunset Western Gardening Book, Golden Gate Gardening)
- Compost and SureStart for amending planting holes
- Watering Cans
- Gloves
- Plants for the space
- Mulch
- Irrigation materials for practice and for newly renovated area
- Evaluations for students
- \$10 Urban Farmer Store gift card for each student

Introduction

A GFE staff person will introduce you to the group at around 10:05 and give out gift

cards. Re-introduce yourself (feel free to plug your work!) and mention that this workshop is Water-Wise Gardening, part two of three in the Introduction to Sustainable Gardening Series, and explain the goal for this workshop. Remind folks that this series is just an introduction – there is much more to learn by taking other workshops and consulting with folks at nurseries. There are also resources at gardenfortheenvironment.org/resources.

Then, make a brief statement about how choices in our gardens can help promote a clean, healthy, abundant watershed by not overusing summer irrigation. Perennial, climate-appropriate planting can also improve the permeability of our city yards and streets during winter rains, replenishing our water table and protecting the ocean and bay from pollution.

A: Water-wise plants and their soil and water needs.

- Discuss what “drought tolerant once established” means.
- Show the students how a quick application of water to very dry soil doesn’t penetrate the hydrophobic surface of the soil.
- Adding organic soil amendments and mulch helps soils accept and retain water.
- Talk about where the roots of plants can be found (our target for irrigation) - slow, deep, infrequent watering is the goal for water-wise
- Remind students about hydrozoning (veggies at GFE get ~5 minutes of water once a day in the summer, water-wise areas get 20-30 minutes every week).

B: Show the students the basics of drip irrigation.

- Introduce the key parts of a drip system (but keep it simple).
- Spread out materials from the irrigation education box and let the students look over and handle the different components.
- Make sure each student gets a chance to connect ½ inch line with compression couplers, use a punch, add and remove ¼ inch emitter line from ½ inch line, and use a goof plug.

Practicum

- In the border area that is being renovated, show the students how to prepare a planting hole (checking drainage, adding organic material, creating a level watering basin, keeping the crown of the plant at the same soil level as it was in its original container).
- Show how to add drip irrigation line to help new plants through the first few seasons in the ground.
- Show how to mulch around the new plant without smothering the plants.
- Now the students get to install new plants and drip irrigation throughout the area being renovated and cover the whole area with mulch (GFE Staff can assist with this portion of the workshop)

Closing

Take a look at any sketches that participants made of their own yards and help with any of their questions about design ideas for their space. Answer questions, fill out evaluations, and make sure any latecomers find GFE Staff to get a gift card. Try to end the class on time (12pm).