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NEWS RELEASE

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Check Moisture Before Ramping Up Landscape Irrigation, Water Providers Urge

SACRAMENTO-- With the recent dry weather and warmer temperatures, Sacramento-area residents might be tempted to ramp up their landscape irrigation. But, the Regional Water Authority and local water providers are recommending restraint.

"Plants don't need as much water this time of year, even without rain," said Linda Yager, Regional Water Efficiency Program Manager. Lower temperatures, shorter daylight hours and moisture from fog and rain all combine to reduce the water demands of a typical landscape. Edible gardens and fruit bearing trees have special water requirements, so please consult with a landscape professional or your local Master Gardeners for more information.

The Regional Water Authority and local water providers offer the following dry winter tips for the typical landscape:

- Before turning on your irrigation system, check the soil to see and feel if it is still moist by using a garden trowel or shovel to dig down about three to six inches. If the soil is dry several inches or more below the surface, water the landscape one day per week, according to your water provider's schedule.

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- Apply the “soak and cycle” method, which means to water your landscape on that one day and let the water soak into the soil for about an hour. Then use a trowel or shovel again to check the soil moisture. If the soil is moist to a depth of three inches or so, you’ve probably watered enough. If the soil is only moist down to a depth of an inch or two, you may need to irrigate for a little longer.
- Understand that if you have the type of lawn that is dormant in the winter, it will not likely need supplemental water.
- Once the rains begin, remember to turn the irrigation system off again.

"The variations in rainfall from year to year are a constant reminder for all of us to use only what we need," Yager said. "Rain or shine, we should be good stewards of our water resources--for the health of the Sacramento region, the state's economy and to ensure it is available today and for future generations."

For more information about free water-efficiency services and rebates, as well as tips for using less water now, residents can contact their local water provider or visit the Be Water Smart Web site at bewatersmart.info.

About the Regional Water Authority: RWA is a joint powers authority representing 24 water providers and affiliates in the greater Sacramento area. Its primary mission is to help its members protect and enhance the reliability, availability, affordability and quality of water resources.

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