

# LESS LAWN MORE EFFICIENCY

## Fact Sheet: New Rules for Watering Lawns in California

California law (AB 1572) will soon prohibit the use of potable (drinking) water to irrigate nonfunctional turf—lawns that serve no recreational or community purpose—at most municipal, government, commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) properties, including common areas managed by homeowner associations (HOAs).

These new rules provide an opportunity to create welcoming new spaces that showcase the beauty of low-water and native plants, highlight your commitment to a sustainable future, and provide a vision for others in your community to follow. They also work in tandem with California's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, which sets standards for water-wise landscape design for projects of a certain square footage.

By taking early action, you can reduce water use and pesticide usage, showcasing the way forward for local businesses, HOAs, landscape designers, and the community at large.

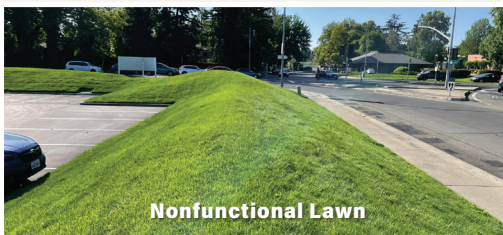


Toyon *Heteromeles arbutifolia*, California native

This fact sheet explains what is changing and how to prepare.



Functional Lawn



Nonfunctional Lawn

## WHAT IS NONFUNCTIONAL LAWN?

Nonfunctional lawn refers to irrigated lawn that is purely ornamental and not regularly used for recreation or public gatherings.

### Examples include:

- Narrow lawn strips in or around parking lots
- Decorative lawn along sidewalks, buildings, or fences
- Lawn between buildings with no seating, access, or activity
- Lawn in medians, roundabouts, or entry signage zones
- Sloped or oddly shaped areas that are hard to use or water efficiently

## WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T COMPLY?

Failure to comply with AB 1572's nonfunctional lawn irrigation restrictions can result in civil penalties of up to \$1,000 per day (California Water Code §1846). Enforcement specifics may vary by water agency; please get in touch with your local water provider for details.

### BY JANUARY 1, 2027:

Public properties owned or managed by local governments—including city and county buildings, libraries, fire and police stations, courthouses, streets and highways, and public utilities—must stop watering nonfunctional lawn.



# CREATE A VISION OF A NEW SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Many cities and counties are using this as an opportunity to transform their public properties and create colorful, sustainable, water-wise landscapes that establish a striking and memorable visual identity at their public properties and inspire residents to do the same.

## Show Off Your Local Roots:

- Create landscapes filled with water-wise plants native to your region.
- Plant gardens that provide sustenance and shelter for native pollinators, birds, butterflies, and bees.
- Add shade trees that help cool buildings and sidewalks.
- Develop demonstration gardens that incorporate features such as stormwater capture, bioswales, recycled water, high-efficiency irrigation systems, and informational signage.

## YOUR WATER PROVIDER IS HERE TO HELP

*Many water agencies offer:*

- Lawn replacement and irrigation rebates
- Free site visits and landscape reviews
- Sample plant lists and design templates
- Tree protection tips and irrigation strategies



**The Loomis Library & Community Learning Center** worked with the UC Master Gardeners of Placer County over six months to transform water-thirsty lawn surrounding the library into a stunning waterwise demonstration garden:

- 11,000 sq. ft. of lawn removed
- 12 unique areas featuring 85 plant varieties
- Serves as a living library and community resource
- Over 70% reduction in water used



**The Santa Barbara Fire Department** created a 1.7-acre Firescape Garden across the street from a fire station. It features:

- Four different plant zones filled with waterwise plants that highlight how to arrange plants around a residence
- A high-efficiency irrigation system that keeps the plants healthy