

# Entranosa Water News

January 30, 2009

**Household Water Pressure and Cross Contamination.** *(we run this every year at this time, but it bears reiterating).* The large majority of our service installations are in a high pressure area. We've installed a pressure reducing valve (PRV) on our service installations that would receive more than 50 psi, and every service installation has a backflow prevention unit (a check valve) incorporated into it. The PRV regulates the pressure from the system to your property and prevents pressure spikes that may be generated by the water system (valves being opened and closed, hydrants slamming shut, or pumps coming on and off) from causing damage to your service line or your home; the check valve protects the water system from contamination that may occur in your home. *The check valve allows water to enter your home but not backflow into the main system, and it effectively creates an isolated pressure environment in your home. The plumbing code, since 1997, has required the installation of a small expansion tank, or other device, to diminish the affects of transient high pressure in your home that is created by heat generating devices (hot water heaters, boilers) that you may utilize. In homes without such a device, we have seen instances where household pressure ranges 40 psi above the 'norm', which can cause some damage to your plumbing or appliances.* We encourage you to assess the needs of your home and consult a licensed plumber, if necessary. If you have symptoms of high pressure (leaky toilets, hot water heater valve popping, etc), please give us a call – we'll be pleased to check it and correct if appropriate.

**Weather and Water Use.** Residential water use this past month was less than last year, averaging about 155 gallons per day. While personal habits differ greatly, if your usage was over 13,000 gallons, we suggest that you consider looking for a leak – toilet, yard line, dripping faucet (that you didn't cause to drip!), etc. While our weather is supposed to have intermittent periods of cold for the next month, it isn't too early to be thinking of Spring, and planning outside work on your property. Please consider using techniques for low water use landscaping. The opposite side of this newsletter provides some proven tips developed by our conservation committee several years ago.

**Isolation Valves** ... and as you consider working outside in the spring – consider installing isolation valves (small ball valves) in your service line. They will allow you to trouble shoot leaks that may occur. It will save you time, water, and possible damage to your property, and help us protect our meters and electronic devices associated with them.

**Rain Barrels.** In line with 'thinking about Spring', we can order rain barrels for you in various sizes and colors, ranging from 55 gallons to 200 gallons in capacity, with 17 different colors.

**New Rate Structure.** With this billing cycle, we have implemented the new rate structure that was presented in the last two newsletters. Should you have questions, please contact the office

**CALL BEFORE YOU DIG – IT IS THE LAW.**

**811**

# Waterwise Tips in the Garden

from the Entranosa Water & Wastewater Association  
Conservation Committee

## *Think Shelter from Drying Winds*

In our part of New Mexico, dry and windy days are all too common. To conserve water, consider creating windbreaks. These may be as simple (and ugly) as rows of old tires. Vegetables can be planted in the tires without the fuss of filling them with dirt. After the growing season, the tires can be stored out of sight.

Other choices for windbreaks might be straw bales or old boards. The boards can be placed on top of newly planted rows of seeds. Remove the boards to water the seeds, but replace them to protect the wet ground from the wind. With the first sign of sprouts, take the boards off the top and prop them up to block the prevailing winds. Bamboo stakes on either side of the boards will prevent them from flopping over when the wind shifts.

## *Save Water by Creating Shade*

Take advantage of the shade created by trees in your yard to establish new plants. In the absence of trees, consider creating a shady spot using lathe or bamboo.

Trees can be trained and pruned to be living shade barriers. Manchurian bush apricots are tough and vigorous growers that can withstand a lot of pruning, encouraging them to spread in the desired directions.

Choose strong, vigorous trees for your shade barriers so they can be shaped to fit your needs. By choosing small, you don't have to water as much or deal with flying branches in a storm. Encouraging the trees to make canopies of leaves just over your head increases the coolness of the shade. Choosing a fruit tree means that some years, at least, you might get a crop.

## *Container Gardening*

Terracotta or clay pots are almost worth-less for container gardening in our climate. The water evaporates through the pot. Plastic tubs work much better. Wooden half barrels are good for container gardening if you waterproof them first to prevent water from evaporating out the sides.

## *Save Water by Mowing*

Mowing can save water. Mowing your property before the grasses set their seeds creates a climate for the grass to return. You will create a yard of mostly tough grasses that don't require extra water other than the rain.

The trick is to mow high and not often. Mowing too low "scalps" the grass blades and exposes them to wind and heat damage. It also exposes the topsoil, which will blow away. Tough, native grasses hold topsoil in place and gradually create a cool oasis around your home without subjecting it to the fire danger of tall, dry weeds.

## *Create 'sponges' for your Plants*

Dig a hold around your plants or trees & fill it with a porous material (shredded newspapers or junk mail, horse manure, or old brush, depending on the size of the hole). Cover the hole with dirt and presto! You have an area that collects water and saves it for your plants, safe from the wind.