

the dirt



WINTER 2022 GARDENING NEWSLETTER

Eye-popping color.

Tips for a year-round rainbow of hues in your garden.

Looking for a landscape that offers splashes and swaths of color throughout the year? Vibrant and flowering plants can create a kaleidoscope of possibilities, if you plan for it. When choosing your plantings for spring, take note of their blooming periods and think ahead to when their foliage might turn red or golden in the fall.

Remember that color comes in many forms, including leaves, bark, fruit and flowers.

- Plan your garden according to the color wheel, selecting either complementary colors on opposite ends of the wheel, or analogous colors adjacent on the wheel.
- Deciduous plants can add seasonal hues to a landscape, and the fallen leaves will promote a healthy soil.
- Plant a small bed or planter of annuals to bring a spark of color for each season.
- Be sure to cluster plants according to their needs for water and sunlight to keep them healthy.



Here are some of our own favorite native plants for color:

- **Manzanitas** (*Arctostaphylos sp.*) – Known for its clusters of white-pink flowers and shedding red-mahogany bark, showy red-tinged fruit, and gray to green foliage.
- **Red-flowered buckwheat** (*Erigonum grande var. rubescens*) – A popular lure for butterflies, with ball-like clusters of flowers in reds and pinks.
- **French lavender** (*Lavandula dentata*) – Gray-green, finely-toothed fragrant leaves that bear short spikes of lavender-mauve flowers year-round.

IRWD's **RightScope database** provides a guided plant search for inspiration, starting with the type of plant, then height, sun, and color. Visit RightScopeResources.com/search.php.

All about roses!

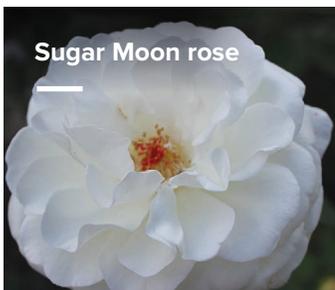


Marilyn Carne-Smith

Marilyn Carne-Smith | Consulting Rosarian

Marilyn Carne-Smith is the go-to person for roses. As a Master Gardener, Consulting Rosarian of the Orange County Rose Society, and a longtime member of the American Rose Society, she helps gardeners grow fragrant, eye-popping beauties.

<< Carne-Smith with her David Austin Gabriel Oak roses.



Sugar Moon rose

IRWD: What got you started in roses?

Carne-Smith: My mom had roses—and while she wanted them, she didn't want to garden. I took over because I was willing to deadhead. It's all about the joy of seeing them bloom and sharing them with others.

plant more than you can care for. I love my soaker hoses. They keep water where it needs to be—circled around the root zone. And mulch, mulch, mulch! It keeps roots cooler in summer and feeds the soil.

IRWD: What are some of your favorites for Orange County?

Carne-Smith: If I had to choose, it would be Sugar Moon, a prize white with the best fragrance ever. Veterans' Honor is a nice red, and Julia Child is a buttery yellow that blooms like crazy, with a very strong fragrance.

IRWD: What tips do you have for this time of year?

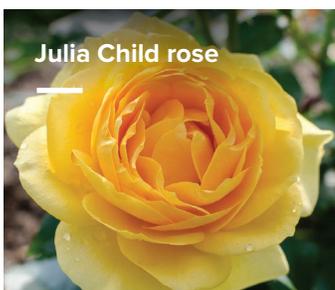
Carne-Smith: January and February are typical times to cut your roses back to about waist height. We don't have a dormant season, and this tells your plants, "You have to rest for a while. Put new roots down." Remove and pick up all old mulch and every single leaf and then spray everything like crazy with dormant oil for early intervention against pests.



Veterans' Honor rose

IRWD: Can roses thrive in our dry climate?

Carne-Smith: For healthy roses, you need to commit to proper watering, and don't



Julia Child rose

Submit questions or learn more at OrangeCountyRoseSociety.org. Also check out University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Orange County at mgorange.ucanr.edu and email questions (with photos) to their hotline at ucceocmghotline@ucanr.edu.

Heart-leaved penstemon,
Keckiella cordifolia

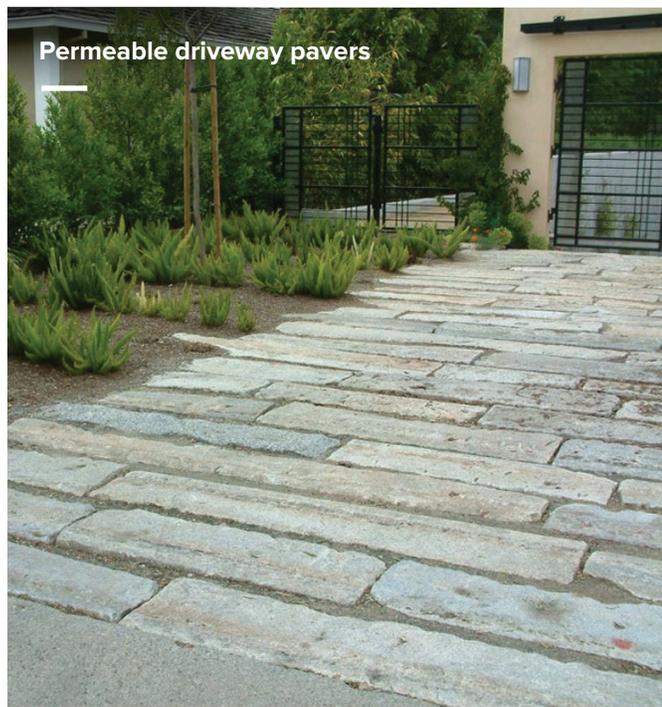
Explore permeable hardscapes.

Refresh your landscape.

Looking for a way to filter water slowly to your landscape? Consider installing a permeable hardscape, which can help store water while filtering pollutants. Permeable hardscapes offer an endless array of colors and textures, and are helpful in creating space for flower beds, borders, and shrubs.

For your home, consider using flagstone on sand with plantings in between. Flagstone comes in a variety of stone types, like granite, slate, or sandstone, and multiple colors including grays, blues, and reddish hues.

When using pavers, use sand to fill in-between spots, and leave larger than normal spacing. You can also use decomposed granites, which have organic binders that allow pavers to stick together, resist erosion, and maintain permeability.



Green incentives

IRWD offers generous rebates of \$4 per square foot for turf removal, and 70¢ per square foot of converted drip irrigation. Visit RightScape.com for a full list of rebates and landscaping tips.



Juan's tip of the season.

Suppress weeds

Landscape fabrics are popular for weed control, but they can create problems in the landscape. For a more natural approach, consider sourcing organic materials such as newspaper and cardboard that can break down and become part of the soil. Mulching right on top prevents weed germination, keeps the soil cool and slows down evaporation, which can decrease yard upkeep. Apart from mulching, eco-friendly solutions like vinegar can come in handy. You'll also want to understand the division of weeds between annuals and perennials. While annuals can be controlled by cutting them down, perennials can persist—especially when the roots are left behind, so it's best to remove them before they go to seed.

Participate in our webinars and community events

Jan. 12 | Noon | Be a GSI: Garden Scene Investigator.

Use your powers of observation and trusted internet resources to solve garden problems, identify plants, and deal with pests. Learn the steps Master Gardeners take when answering questions on their hotline. Sign up and discover more webinars and events at RightScope.com/events.

Tap RightScope resources

Visit RightScope.com for rebates to help offset the cost of turf removal, weather-based irrigation controllers, efficient sprinkler heads, drip kits and more. Plus, check out our plant database at RightScopeResources.com.

Looking ahead.

Upcoming garden to-do list

- **March tip – Prune, compost, plant:** This is a perfect time to apply organic amendments to your garden. Light pruning can encourage growth, and conditions are ideal for planting, especially perennials. Plan ahead for summer flowering bulbs.
- **April tip – Fertilize fruit trees:** Early spring is a good time to plant citrus trees. Consider fertilizing established varieties such as citrus, tropical, and avocados during this time.
- **May tip – Tune up your sprinkler system:** Check your sprinkler system and make sure it is working as efficiently as possible. Keep an eye on your plants with extreme temperatures on the horizon, and raise those mowing heights for water conservation.

About The Dirt

The Dirt is a quarterly gardening resource from Irvine Ranch Water District, created to help you grow a more beautiful, water-efficient garden. Each newsletter brings you seasonal tips to keep plants thriving all year long.

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