



## Don't start watering yet — we're still in Stage 2

Let your sprinklers slumber on. After all, your lawn is still snoozing too. And that's a good thing since we're starting off the new year still under watering rules.

Occasional showers in December were a welcome relief, but they didn't put an end to the ongoing drought. Back-to-back years of record heat paired with a severe lack of rainfall continues to challenge the Edwards Aquifer. This means Stage 2 watering rules — and enforcement of them — are still in effect.

As a reminder, under Stage 2, landscape watering with a sprinkler, irrigation system or soaker hose is allowed only from 7-11 a.m. and 7-11 p.m., one day a week, based on the last number of your street address. You can still hand-water with a hose-end nozzle any time.

SAWS water enforcers are patrolling neighborhoods, including gated communities, and issuing fines — not warnings. So make sure your irrigation system is set to water only on your day between 7 and 11.

Even better: just turn off your irrigation system and run it manually only as needed. Doing so will not only help you save water now, but it can add up to big savings throughout 2024. That's because SAWS sewer charges are based on your average winter water use — meaning the less water you use through mid-March, the lower your monthly sewer charge will be for the rest of 2024.

Remember to visit [GardenStyleSA.com](http://GardenStyleSA.com) for weekly watering advice and landscaping tips to keep your yard thriving — even in drought.

### WRANGLE YOUR WATER USE

GARDEN LIKE A TEXAN

## STAGE 2 WATER WISELY

#### CHECK THE TIME

7-11 AM MORNINGS

7-11 PM EVENINGS

#### KNOW YOUR DAY

M	T	W	TH	F
0	2	4	6	8
1	3	5	7	9

LAST DIGIT OF ADDRESS

WATER ONCE A WEEK

## WATER EMERGENCY TIPS

You may not know when an emergency will happen, but you can plan ahead so you'll be ready for the unexpected.

Fill bathtub with water

Battery-powered Or hand crank radio

Batteries

First aid kit

Flashlights

[saws.org/BeReady](http://saws.org/BeReady)  
210-704-SAWS

## READY FOR THE UNEXPECTED

## Event Calendar

### Ethnobotany of Native Plants Tour

**Feb. 8**

San Antonio Botanical Garden  
555 Funston Place  
[sabot.org](http://sabot.org)

### San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo

**Feb. 8-25**

Frost Bank Center/Freeman Coliseum  
3201 E. Houston St.  
[sarodeo.com](http://sarodeo.com)

### Mardi Gras Festival & River Parade

**Feb. 10**

Arneson River Theatre  
418 Villita St.  
[thesanantonioriverwalk.com](http://thesanantonioriverwalk.com)

### Star Party

**Feb. 17**

Guadalupe River State Park  
3350 Park Road 31, Spring Branch  
[tpwd.texas.gov/calendar](http://tpwd.texas.gov/calendar)

### Beginner Bird Walk

**Feb. 24**

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center  
10750 Pleasanton Road  
[mitchelllake.audubon.org](http://mitchelllake.audubon.org)

### Customer Service and 24-hour Emergency

**210-704-SAWS (7297)**  
[saws.org/waternews](http://saws.org/waternews)

## Six simple steps to a splendid spring garden

Timing is everything when it comes to gardening. Our typically mild winters are ideal for getting some prep work done for a great spring garden.

- 1. Clean up struggling or diseased plants.** Leave the rest in place to enrich soil, reduce erosion and provide winter habitat for slumbering pollinators.
- 2. Remove invasive weeds that may have taken hold over the growing season.** Use a hand trowel or small shovel to remove the entire root.



- 3. Resist the urge to fertilize or add compost.** Only the winter weeds will benefit.

- 4. Prune freeze-damaged perennials** but leave damaged vegetation as wildlife shelter and seed meals for overwintering birds. Avoid pruning most evergreen shrubs.

- 5. Replenish mulch** to help regulate soil temperature and moisture and provide a buffer against a rare hard frost or freezing weather.

- 6. Clean and sharpen tools** to stretch their lifespan.

## Help slash trash at Basura Bash Feb. 17!

Known as the largest single-day waterway cleanup in Texas, Basura Bash saw more than 1,500 volunteers collect nearly 23 tons of trash in 2022 from San Antonio's rivers and streams.

From cigarette butts and plastic bags to a working washing machine and even the bed of a pick-up truck, volunteers diligently dedicate a Saturday



morning to pick up as much trash as possible — recycling what they can and discarding the rest.

You can join these trash-slashing superheroes in the citywide effort during Basura Bash 2024 from 9 a.m. to noon Feb. 17.

Online registration is open now. Visit [basurabash.org](http://basurabash.org) for more information and to sign up!

## Oaks need pruning? Don't wait too long.

There's not much time left to prune your oak trees this winter — especially if you want to minimize the chance of oak wilt. During the coldest days of the year, the beetles that carry the spores of the oak wilt fungus are very few and unlikely to fly.

Pruning is done for three reasons (in order of importance): safety, tree health and appearance.

Some helpful dos and don'ts:

- Prune narrow branch junctions that are V-shaped; these are structurally weak, especially if two or more of the branches are of equal diameters. Long branches that have been repeatedly stripped of their

lateral branches should be shortened or removed completely.

- Look for the "3-D" branches — dead, diseased and dying. These are a source of disease and insects, as well as a food source to attract more of same.
- Never cut through the branch collar. This donut-shaped ring at the junction of two branches or trunks is a zone of specialized cells and chemicals that reduces the potential for decay and disease.



Finally, always paint fresh oak wounds — this is a must to preventing oak wilt. (You don't need to paint the wounds for elm, ash, sycamore, pine, tallow or pecan trees.)