CONSERVATION Current

THIS ISSUE

750 xeriscape plants at your mobile fingertips!

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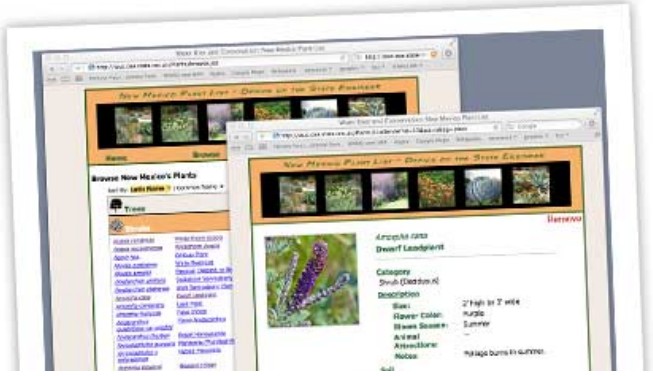
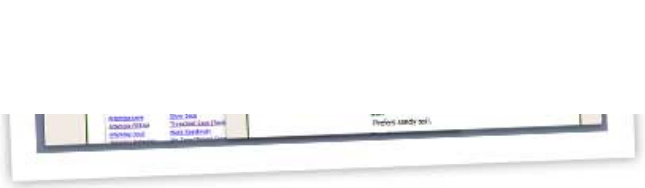
Access the Interactive Plant Database via a new app



Have you ever been strolling through a nursery when your eye spots a gorgeous plant, you read the tag, and then wonder out loud if it would be a good choice for your landscape? Well now you can consult the experts at the push of a button. New Mexico State University (NMSU) has developed a free mobile Apple app that gives users instant access to the NM

gives users instant access to the NM Office of the State Engineer (NMOSE) Interactive Plant List.



Anyone can access this database, which has information on 750 plants that are well suited for the xeriscaped yard. When some people think of xeriscaping, they think of gravel, but that is a myth that we all need to bust. A xeriscaped landscape can offer shade, colorful blooms, and native wildlife buzzing, fluttering, and humming from plant to plant, and the database can assure the right plant finds its rightful place in your southwest garden.

“One way we help homeowners and landscapers conserve water is by offering them an easy link to the database,” says Steff Sutherin, a NMSU College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences graduate student who coordinates for the Center for Landscape Water Conservation. The Center is an organization whose mission is to develop water-wise landscape education and water management tools to serve the people of the southwest, primarily New Mexico and West Texas.

You can search by a plant’s scientific or common name, and you’ll be delighted to find lots of information about trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals, cacti, turf grasses, ornamental grasses, groundcover and vines – all plants that can survive and thrive in a xeriscaped garden. You can also find information on size, flower color, bloom season, soil needs, sun exposure and water requirements.
“This is the first data driven app we have built,” says J.C. Chamberlin, programmer analyst with NMSU media production. “The NMOSE database was a good candidate for us because they had this rich source of information that wasn’t mobile. Our goal was to make it accessible, as well as fun to browse, so a lot of effort went into getting colorful photos of the plants.”

Cheri Vogel from NMOSE Water Use and Conservation Bureau said the response to the app has been great. “We’re excited to partner with NMSU on this project. Their app enhances this valuable plant resource and makes it more widely available to the public.”

For more information on the web-based database, visit the NMOSE Interactive Plant List website. You’ll find a link to the iPad or iPhone app at the Apple App Store, or at the Center for Landscape Water Conservation.

Center for Landscape Water Conservation is a cooperative venture among NMSU, Texas AgriLife Extension at El Paso, University of New Mexico, University of Texas at El Paso, San Juan College, New Mexico Office of the State Engineer, municipal water conservation coordinators, private landscapers, and the business community. The goal of the Center is to coordinate applied research projects, along with demonstration and outreach activities that focus on water-wise landscaping in the southwest.

The Office of the State Engineer administrates the state’s water resources. The State Engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream.

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Daniel Ransom takes position in Tucson, Arizona

Native New Mexican, Daniel Ransom, has moved even deeper into the desert. This past May, Dan accepted the position of Water Conservation Program Manager for the City of Tucson, Arizona.

Dan worked for the City of Santa Fe for over 14 years and most recently served as the City’s Water Conservation Manager. During his tenure at the city, Dan strengthened the irrigation auditing programs, brought new irrigation technologies to city parks, helped run irrigation training programs and conferences, and established the children’s water fiesta and poster contest. Daniel is an ARCSA Accredited Professional, holds five certifications with the Irrigation Association (CLIA, CGIA, CID, CIC, and CAIS), and is a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for Water Efficiency, which is the journal for water resource management.

Santa Fe has Dan to thank for establishing the rebate program when he secured grant funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Before leaving Santa Fe, he was involved in establishing the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) certification, which is part of a water auditing class at Santa Fe Community College.

In his new position, Dan will be overseeing Tucson’s water conservation programs and implementing the new rainwater harvesting incentives rebate program. Although we know Dan is going to miss New Mexico, he is ready to help the Tucson

community meet its challenge of conserving water in this age of drought.

As for New Mexico's water conservation community, know that we all miss you already, Dan, along with your great sense of humor and unending dedication to water conservation. Tucson's gain is our loss. We look forward to seeing you at the fall water conferences!

Dan's new contact information is:
Daniel Ransom
Tucson Water
Water Conservation Program Manager
(520) 837-2187
Daniel.Ransom@tucsonaz.gov

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Rio Rancho brings back popular water conservation rebate program

The City of Rio Rancho is excited to announce the return of the water conservation rebate program! It's been more than three years since the city's Water Conservation Office has had money in the budget to offer incentives for replacing high water-use toilets and clothes washers with high-efficiency fixtures. "The city's budget is much better this year when compared to the last several years," said Larry Webb, Utilities Manager.

As of July 1, 2012, the city is offering $100 credit to customers' water bills when they replace an older toilet (that uses at least 3.0 gallons per flush) with an EPA WaterSense high-efficiency toilet (HET) that flushes 1.28 gallons or less. Rebates of $100 are available to customers who purchase high-efficiency clothes washers listed on the Consortium for Energy Efficiency's (CEE) Tier 3 list. Clothes washer rebates are limited to one per customer. Tier 3 clothes washers and HETs are the most water-conserving fixtures on today's market and give the largest "water-bang" for the buck.

The average number of gallons of water used per person (gpcd) has been dropping in Rio Rancho over the last few years. The 2011 gpcd was 141.77 for system-wide water use and 78 gpcd for single-family residential use. One reason for this drop is that lower water use fixtures were installed in new homes.
"We still have pockets of older homes in Rio Rancho that we will target for the incentives," said Ruben Archuleta, Rio Rancho Water Conservation Specialist. "Luckily, the city is relatively young, incorporated in 1981, so we do not have many five- or seven-gallon toilets anymore."

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Water-fill station comes to the City of Rio Rancho

The City of Rio Rancho recently installed a pay-as-you-go water-fill station for Sandoval County residents who do not have a water source. These residents live just outside the western border of Rio Rancho in an unincorporated area of the county. Drilling a domestic well in this area is expensive, and the groundwater level is deep below the surface. The groundwater also contains naturally occurring arsenic.

The water-fill station should be open for use by the end of this August.

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Rio Rancho teaches 4th graders about arsenic in groundwater

When 175 fourth-grade students toured Rio Rancho's largest arsenic treatment plant last April, they learned not only about the importance of conserving water in our parched southwest landscape, but also what arsenic is and how it occurs naturally in our groundwater. The students from E. Stapleton Elementary School walked to the treatment plant from their school, which is about one-quarter mile from the facility.

"They kept coming in droves," exclaimed Lynn Kronowit, Sustainability Champion of CH2M Hill OMI, which is Rio Rancho's contract water and wastewater operator. "It's terrific to have students tour the facility and learn where their water comes from and how important it is to conserve this precious resource."

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Aquifer rises about 50 feet during pilot project in Rio Rancho

Last year Rio Rancho drilled one injection well and five monitor wells as part of a pilot study program. One million gallons of potable water per day were injected into the aquifer over a period of 11 days. Potable water was used for two reasons: One, to prove that the water could infiltrate the aquifer, and two, to study the impacts of this water on the aquifer.

Depending on test results, highly-purified effluent will someday be injected into the aquifer during the winter months to be stored for later use. During the irrigation season, it will be used to water large turf areas such as the golf course, city parks, and school playfields. Bob Marley of Daniel B. Stephens is the consultant on the project.

Preliminary results from the spring testing showed the water level of the aquifer rose about 50 feet during the testing period. A tracer of sulfur hexafluoride was injected along with the potable water and was detected within 10 days at a monitor well 75 feet from the injection well.

The next steps for this project are:

- Additional testing in the fall using potable water for the injection,
- Working with state regulators to complete the discharge permit,
- Holding public meetings, and
- Building the advanced treatment facility at the site.

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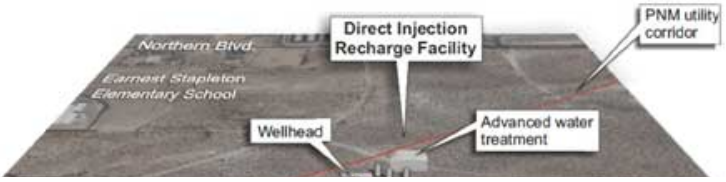

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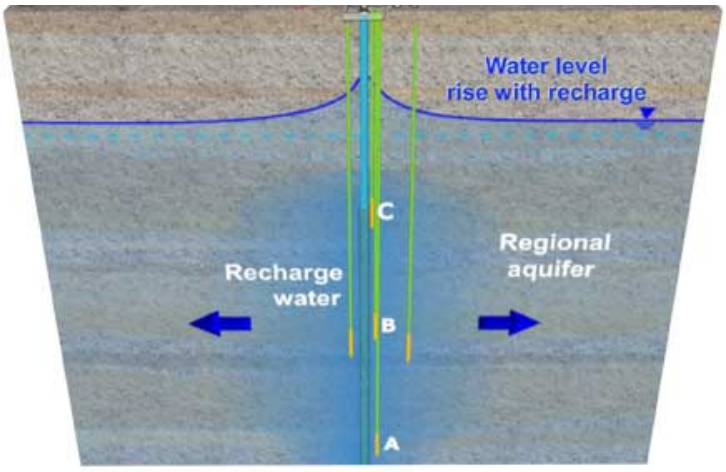

A Newsletter Published by the New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance

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