

# on the WaterFront



Summer 2025

## CREATING RESILIENT LANDSCAPES: FIRE-SMART AND WATER-WISE PRACTICES

*Jointly authored by Marin Water and Fire Safe Marin*


As hotter, drier summers and more frequent wind-driven wildfires become the norm, our communities must rethink how we care for our landscapes. Whether you live in a high fire severity zone or a more urbanized part of the community, every property owner has a role in protecting our community. The good news: Resilient landscapes can be both fire-smart and water-efficient – without sacrificing beauty. Marin Water and Fire Safe Marin have teamed up to share practical guidance and helpful resources to support your landscaping goals.

### Smart Landscaping Actions You Can Take

#### Choose fire-resistant, water-wise plants and reduce lawn areas


Replace flammable, high-water-use plants with fire-resistant, drought-tolerant and pollinator-friendly choices, such as California natives and Mediterranean species with low oil content and high moisture retention. Consider reducing or removing traditional lawns to lower outdoor water use and create a more sustainable, low-maintenance landscape.


 Water-Wise Plant List by the Sonoma-Marin Partnership

 Marin Water's Cash for Grass program offers as much as \$4.68 per square foot of lawn converted to sustainable landscaping.

#### Create defensible space with appropriate materials and spacing


In the 0 to 5 feet area around your home (Zone 0), use only non-combustible materials like gravel or pavers. Removing flammable materials in this area helps reduce the home's vulnerability to ignition. When planting outside of Zone 0, space plants apart to reduce the risk of flames spreading during a fire.


 Fire Safe Marin's website and YouTube channel offer guidance on low-cost or no-cost actions you can take to prepare your property for wildfire.

 For qualifying residents, Marin Wildfire provides grants for vegetation management and fire-resistant building materials.

#### Mulch and irrigate wisely

Use composted organic mulch further away from the home (Zones 2 and 3), and gravel or rock in Zone 0 to reduce fire risk. Group plants by water needs (hydrozoning) and install drip irrigation and smart controllers to use water efficiently.

 Marin Water offers customer rebates for smart irrigation controllers.

 Marin Water publishes a Weekly Watering Schedule with recommended watering guidance based on irrigation equipment, plant type and current weather conditions.

#### Incorporate hardscape features and permeable materials

Use gravel paths, non-combustible sitting areas and walls to separate plants, create firebreaks and reduce irrigation needs. Choose permeable materials to support water infiltration and reduce runoff.





By Yardzen

### Let's Work Together

A fire-smart, water-efficient landscape can be beautiful and protective. With thoughtful design and regular care, you can help safeguard your home and community.



  Access the resources and incentives mentioned in this article: Scan the QR code or visit [marinwater.org/FirescapingGuide](https://marinwater.org/FirescapingGuide)





## Don't Skip the Upkeep: Why Maintenance Matters in a Landscape

Creating a beautiful, sustainable and fire smart landscape is just the first step. Ongoing maintenance is essential to supporting fire resilience, water efficiency and long-term plant health. Even the most thoughtfully designed landscapes can become hazardous without regular upkeep. Each season, take time to:

- Remove weeds, dead plant material and debris from roofs and gutters.
- Prune low tree limbs, remove dead vegetation and clear overgrowth.
- Check and adjust irrigation to avoid leaks or overwatering.
- Water consistently to keep plants healthy and resilient.

### Tools and Support to Help You Stay on Track

- **Flume Smart Home Water Monitor Discount:** Marin Water customers get a deep discount on this device, which tracks water use and alerts you to leaks – right from your phone.
- **Free Chipper Day Program:** Get free curbside pickup of branches and trimmings through Marin Wildfire's seasonal service. Sign up at [ChipperDay.com/Marin](https://chipperday.com/marin).
- **Pro Help for When You Need It:** Hire a "Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper" (a QWEL-certified professional) to ensure your landscape is maintained to minimize loss during a fire.

## Rethink Sheared Hedges and Bamboo: Fire-Smart Privacy Screen Alternatives

Dense hedges and bamboo may offer privacy, but they can also increase fire risk – especially when dry, overgrown or planted too close to structures. Thankfully, there are attractive, lower-risk alternatives that are more water efficient and require less maintenance. Look for plants with large, moisture-retaining leaves, low oil content and a natural structure that doesn't require constant trimming. Below are potential options:

- Catalina cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*)
- Lemonade berry (*Rhus integrifolia*)
- Pacific wax myrtle (*Myrica californica*)
- Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*, *P. lusitanica*)
- Buckthorn (*Rhamnus* spp.)
- Photinia and others!

For additional guidance on planning for privacy screens, visit [firesafemarin.org/privacy-screens](https://firesafemarin.org/privacy-screens).



Buckthorn used for backyard privacy screening

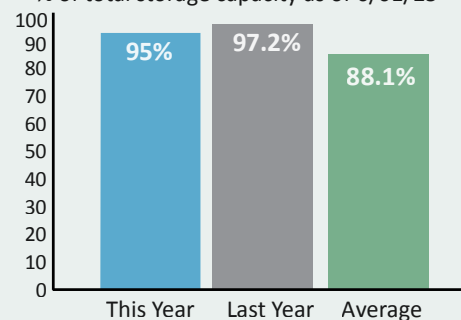
## About Our Water Supply

About 75% of the District's water supply comes from local reservoirs located on Mt. Tamalpais and in west Marin. The following chart displays storage, usage and rainfall data as of June 1, 2025.

For real-time data, visit [marinwater.org/WaterWatch](https://marinwater.org/WaterWatch).

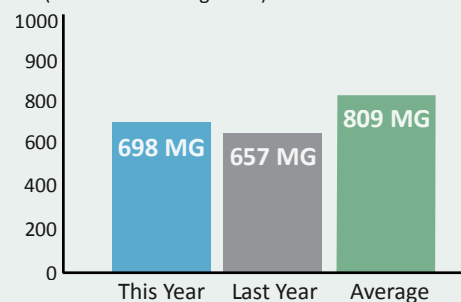
### Reservoir Storage

% of total storage capacity as of 6/01/25



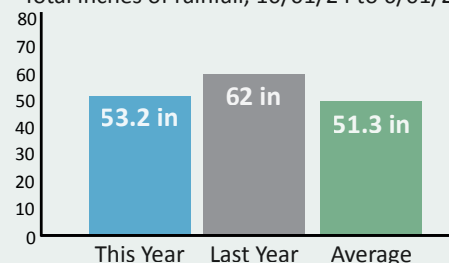
### Water Usage

Total May water usage  
(MG = millions of gallons)



### Rainfall Information

Total inches of rainfall, 10/01/24 to 6/01/25



## OUR MISSION

*Marin Water manages the lands, water, and facilities in our trust to provide reliable, high-quality water and adapt and sustain these precious resources for the future.*

**Board of Directors**  
Matthew Samson  
Diana Maier  
Ranjiv Khush  
Jed Smith  
Larry Russell

**General Manager**  
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Board of Directors meetings are typically on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 6:30 p.m. Learn more at [marinwater.org](https://marinwater.org).