



Your source for all things water

Don't water — it's still winter, and we're still in Stage 3

If your sprinklers are slumbering, well done — because your lawn is still hibernating too. And that's a good thing since we're starting off 2025 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 continue to challenge the Edwards Aquifer. This means Stage 3 watering rules are still in effect.

As a reminder, Stage 3 watering hours for sprinklers — in-ground and hose-end — are 5-10 a.m. and 9 p.m. to midnight on your once-a-week watering day.

You can still water with a hand-held hose any time, any day. And you may even enjoy it! Our typically mild winters are ideal for getting outside and doing some prep work for a great spring garden.

Here's what you can tend to now.

- 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 trowel or small shovel to remove the entire root.
- 3. Prune freeze-damaged perennials** but leave damaged vegetation as wildlife shelter and seed meals for overwintering birds. Avoid pruning most evergreen shrubs.
- 4. Replenish mulch** to help regulate soil temperature and moisture and provide a buffer against a rare hard frost or freezing weather.
- 5. Clean and sharpen tools** to extend their lifespan.



Remember to visit GardenStyleSA.com for weekly watering advice and landscaping tips.

Parra wraps up six successful years on SAWS Board



SAWS Trustees and staff thanked outgoing Secretary Eduardo Parra for his service during his final Board meeting, Dec. 10 at SAWS Headquarters. A tribute video highlighted Parra's six years of service and expert leadership to SAWS. Among his accolades: being a key advisor as SAWS navigated construction of the \$3.4 billion Vista Ridge water supply project; steering SAWS through massive sewer improvement work under the EPA consent decree; helping launch resiliency plans to strengthen SAWS infrastructure against severe weather; contributing to the Board decision to implement the ConnectH2O electronic meter project; and helping update SAWS' five-year water conservation plan. Pictured (l to r): SAWS Chairwoman Jelynn LeBlanc Jamison, Parra, Mayor Ron Nirenberg and SAWS President/CEO Robert R. Puente.



saws.org/BeReady
210-704-SAWS



READY FOR THE UNEXPECTED

Join the MySAWS Conversation:



Event Calendar

San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo

Feb. 6-23

Frost Bank Center/Freeman Coliseum
3201 E. Houston St.
sarodeo.com

Poetry Hike

Feb. 15

Government Canyon State Natural Area
12861 Galm Road
tpwd.texas.gov/calendar

Trees and Torque Car, Bike & Truck Show

Feb. 15

Palo Alto College
1400 W. Villaret Blvd.
bexarbranches.org

Practical Landscape Design

Feb. 22

San Antonio Botanical Garden
555 Funston Place
sabot.org

Guided Bird Tour

Feb. 23

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center
10750 Pleasanton Road
mitchelllake.audubon.org

Earthwise Living Day

March 1

Leon Valley Community Center
6427 Evers Road
leonvalleytexas.gov

Customer Service and 24-hour Emergency

210-704-SAWS (7297)
saws.org/waternews

Leon Creek getting some makeover love

With a ceremonial turning of the dirt, a project that's been in the planning stages for several years is finally coming to fruition.

Treatment crews from SAWS' Leon Creek Water Recycling Center celebrated a much-anticipated ground-breaking in November for the plant's new administration building.

The new 7,700-square foot, \$9.9 million building, located near the plant entrance at Mauermann Road on the city's South Side, includes a new process



lab, fitness room, conference room, break room and crew quarters, as well as a new entry gate and wider concrete entry drive, landscaping, electronic vehicle chargers and backup generator.

It's the first new administration building for a wastewater treatment facility since SAWS was founded in 1992. Crews will move in by the end of 2025.

The timing to complete construction of the new administration building aligns with upcoming Leon Creek plant improvements, set to begin in 2026.

Prune now to avoid oak wilt

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 illness and insects, as well as a food source to attract more disease and insects.
- 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.

Leaks lurking? Solve a water-use mystery

Whether you discover a surprise leak or receive a leak alert from your free WaterSmart home report, SAWS has resources available 24/7 to help you locate the source of the problem.

At saws.org/leak, there's a helpful checklist to walk you through all your home's water features to check for potential leaks, as well as tips for troubleshooting possible water-wasting appliances. You can also view how-to videos on reading your water meter, testing your toilet, and much more.

If you're unable to find the issue using these tools and decide to call a licensed plumber or irrigator, there's even a checklist you can share with them to ensure all areas are evaluated.

To become your home's detective and solve any water-use mysteries, visit saws.org/leak.

