

**Honoring Presidents Day:
Monday, February 17**
**The District Office will be closed for
routine assistance.**

THE METER READER
FEBRUARY 2025

Mission Statement: To provide, protect, and maintain Joshua Tree's water - our vital community resource.

CONTENTS

>>> In This Issue

Pages 2-4

- February Water Saving Tip
- Curious Minds Want to Know
- In Case You Missed It
- Farmer's Market Booth
- Your Leadership in Action
- Plant of the Month
- Gardening Tips

>>> Special Articles

Pages 5-11

- Keeping Fire Hydrants READY
- Spring Native Plant Sale (sneak peak)
- Spring Volunteer/Docent Meeting
- National Invasive Plant Week
- Free Upcoming Water Saving Classes:
 - Desert Edible Gardening Course (V)
 - Native Plant Gardening (V)



agenda

Board Meetings:

- Regular Board Meeting - 2.05.25 @ 5:30 pm
- Regular Board Meeting - 2.19.25 @ 5:30 pm

Committee Meetings:

- Finance Committee - 01.08.25 -@ 9:00 am
- Water Resources & Ops - 01.08.25 @ 11:00 am

Classes & Events:

- Docent Volunteer Meeting: 02.21.25 @5PM
 - Seed to Salad 15 week course (see below)
 - Native Plant Sale + Free give-aways: 03.30.24*
- *Mark your calendar and watch for more information in our February Meter Reader!*

Monthly Water Use

NOVEMBER

GPCD

The measure used for reporting water conservation is called Gallons per Capita per Day (GPCD). The GPCD value reported here reflects water usage from three months earlier. California aims to achieve 42 GPCD by the year 2030.

Keep saving, Joshua Tree!

»»» FEBRUARY WATER SAVING TIP

There are numerous guidelines for efficient watering of your desert landscape, but regardless of the season, temperatures, or soil types, one rule holds true: do not water when it is windy! Wind will evaporate surface water long before the plants get a chance to take a thirsty drink, or it can even displace the water completely, depriving plants of any water, depending on the strength of the wind.

»»» Curious Minds Want to Know Enjoy the question of the month

Question:

What is the difference between a power blackout versus a power brownout? How do they affect our water?

Answer:

A brownout is a partial reduction in power to sections of an electrical grid. A blackout is an unplanned, total loss of power to part or all of an electrical grid. Brownouts are sometimes planned by utility companies to prevent power surges or blackouts caused by sudden increases in demand.

In either situation, it is critical to employ water conservation practices due to the fact that power is required to pump water up to our tanks/reservoirs to maintain sufficient levels of water. *Without* conservation of water, the tank water levels may drop -- impacting pressure and more!



»»» IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

Photo caption: Last fall, the US Water Alliance visited JBWD for an in-depth encounter in support of their efforts to assist the District with Chromium-6 state compliance issues.



»»» JT FARMERS' MARKET: FEBRUARY

The February theme at our Farmers Market booth is, "National Invasive Species Week" (see more below on this). We'll also be offering a brief survey on our local water. The results will be presented directly to the JBWD Board of Directors at their upcoming April 2nd meeting (which is open to the public--virtually or in person). So come on out and let your voice be counted! The market is open from 8AM-1PM every Saturday in the heart of JT!



YOUR LEADERSHIP IN ACTION <<<

A heavy agenda awaited the Board of Directors at their January 15th, 2025, regular meeting. The Board minutes from this meeting provide an explanation of the following topics, along with the video of the Board discussions. To learn more, visit: <https://www.jbwd.com/board-of-directors>.

ITEM A: Rate Scenario Analysis: *Tabled until April*

ITEM B: Notice of Pre-Approved Rate and Guarantee Deposit Escalations & Pre-Approved Capacity Charge Escalations (Part A) *Passed: 4-0*

ITEM C: Meter Connection Fee Methodology and Fee Changes (Part B) *Passed: 4-0*

ITEM D: Replacement Payroll Processing Services Provider (PACOM) *Passed: 4-0*

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND MEETING PRACTICES

The District invites our community to attend any of our regular, special or committee Board meetings, and offer these few key rules for attendance:

Members of the public must be able to address the board regarding items on the agenda before or during the governing board's consideration of the item.

GOV. CODE, § 54954.3

- Every regular meeting agenda shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to address the board on any item of interest to the public, within the subject matter jurisdiction of the board.
- No action shall be taken until the matter is properly noticed on an agenda or an exception to the 72-hour rule is established.
- Every notice of a special meeting shall provide an opportunity for members of the public address the legislative body concerning any item appearing on that agenda.



February 2025 Plant of the Month

'Belgravia Rose' Sunrose *Helianthemum hybrid*

Plant Form: Evergreen perennial
Water Use: Low, moderate
Mature Size: 0.5-0.7 ft. tall x 2-4 ft. wide
Exposure: Full Sun, Part Sun
Bloom Time: Spring (May), Summer (June-Aug), Fall (Sept-Oct)
Native to: Hybrid
Hardiness: Cold Hardy to 25°F

'Belgravia Rose' Sunrose is noted for its beauty, abundance of blossoms, and ability to thrive on poor soils with little to no irrigation once established in Mediterranean climates. This low-growing, eye-catching evergreen sub-shrub is covered with so many flowers from late spring to midsummer, it can look like a total carpet of flowers. One-inch-wide flowers open for a day, then close by evening, but due to the mass of flowers, the entire plant can be hidden behind the blossoms. Plant in soil with good drainage in full sun to part shade with regular to infrequent summer irrigation. While attracting pollinators to its flowers, this sunrose is both deer and rabbit resistant. Shear after flowering for a tight growth shape and to encourage repeat bloom. Belgravia Rose is great for an edging, a sunny border, flower beds, or a small groundcover, as well as in rock and cottage gardens, or cascading over a stone wall.



Water-Conserve Today for Tomorrow

Alliance for Water
Awareness and Conservation

For more information on low-water-use gardening,
contact your local water provider or go to

www.mojavewater.org/conservation/awac/

Photos © 2025 Robin Kobaly - Content © 2025 The Power of Plants (www.PowerofPlants.com)
Produced by The SummerTree Institute (www.SummerTree.org)

➤➤➤ GARDENING TIPS FOR YOUR DESERT-SMART LANDSCAPE:

- Water after 9AM or before 3PM. Avoid watering on windy days to save water. Turn off irrigation timers if it rains
- Plant ground covers, bulbs, low-water-use plants, and natives if you missed the fall planting season
- Plant bare-root trees and shrubs through early March
- Prune evergreens now, but not later in spring or summer
- Prune the rest of your summer-blooming, deciduous fruit and nut trees, roses, and dormant shrubs
- Fertilize perennials, and trees with slow-release plant food; but not natives
- Water trees deeply to prepare for spring growth surge and create deeper roots

Historic uses of 'Belgravia Rose' Sunrose

(Helianthemum hybrid)

Sunrose is non-toxic to humans, however ingestion can cause mild irritation. It also actively contributes to improved indoor air quality. This resilient plant absorbs common indoor pollutants, making your living space not only more beautiful but also healthier.



KEEPING FIRE HYDRANTS READY!

WHAT JBWD DOES, AND WHAT YOU CAN DO, TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHEN WILDFIRES THREATEN

Did you know that it is JBWD’s responsibility, not our local fire services, to inspect, exercise, and maintain all fire hydrants within the water system? JBWD does this no less than tri-annually. This is an ambitious task when you consider our system has over 1,426 fire hydrants! This is critical work, considering recent current events that make fire season a 12-month concern.

The January Los Angeles fires left many asking the question about how fire hydrants can actually go “dry”. While there is a list of possibilities, seasoned firefighters are in agreement as to the most common reason for being:



- Water pressure drops too low if water resources are deficient:
 - This can easily occur when a brush fire involves numerous homes that have been evacuated, and the owners failed to turn the water off at the meter before leaving. If fire destroys the indoor water pipes, it can leave water to “geyser” out of a damaged, connected pipeline. This drains down the water supply, depleting the water pressure for continued firefighting.
 - Most fire hydrants use the same water that flows into the household tap. That in mind, a standard fire hose can spray as much as 125 gallons of water per minute. If several homes catch fire, that water source will be stressed, again--reducing water pressure--impacting water flow.

REMEMBER: If you need to evacuate and time and safety allow, make sure to turn off your water at the meter (don’t forget to shut off your gas or propane as well!). Another helpful tip to mitigate fire damage and assist firefighters in maintaining optimal water pressure is to close doors and windows as you exit. This can prevent blowing embers from igniting your home.

If you are leaving vehicles behind and conditions permit, closing the windows of the vehicles can also help reduce the risk of sparks and embers entering them.



Under California Penal Code 148.2, it is illegal to obstruct firefighters or interfere with fire equipment, including fire hydrants. Additionally, California Vehicle Code 22514 prohibits parking within 15 feet of a fire hydrant unless the vehicle is attended by a licensed driver ready to move it. Violations can result in fines, towing, or other penalties. These laws ensure emergency responders have quick access to hydrants, protecting public safety and property.

Above all, be fire smart and observe Red Flag Warnings!

A Red Flag Warning is essentially a heads-up. Sign-up for free alerts at:
<https://wp.sbcounty.gov/sheriff/alerts/>

What to do if you get a Red Flag Warning:

People should prepare for a possible ignition or evacuation, like keeping their phones charged and making sure they know where their loved ones, especially people with disabilities or mobility issues are during the day. They'll want to make a plan for what to do with any pets or livestock, too.

In general, Red Flag Warnings caution you do the following:

- Before people leave home for the day, they should make sure that all of their house and car windows are closed and could even bring flammable materials like outdoor furniture cushions inside the home or garage.
- Other precautions included removing any dead shrubbery around your house that could maintain a fire
- Keeping your vehicle off dry grass or vegetation
- Avoid using power equipment that creates sparks
- Avoid outdoor BBQ's and fire pits

DODONN

DON'T FORGET:

Wildfires do not only endanger our lives, pets, wildlife, dwellings, and terrain, but they can severely deplete water supplies as well!





»» A SNEAK PEAK OF THE SPRING NATIVE PLANT SALE OFFERINGS

Note: The 2025 Native Plant Sale is held annually at the Joshua Basin Water District the last Sunday in March (3/30) from 1PM-3PM. All seedlings (over 500+) are \$9 each, or 3/\$25. Native plants are presented with a “deep root” planting container to jump-start their growth. See next month’s newsletter for more information on this highly anticipated event!

Acton Brittlebush (*Encelia action*)
Bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*)
Brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*)
Catclaw Acacia (*Senegalia greggii*)
Cattle Saltbush (*Triplex Polycarpa*)
Cheesebush (*Ambrosia salsola*)
Creosote Bush (*Laria tridentata*)
Desert Globe Mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*)
Desert Milkweed (*Asclepias rosa*)
Desert Pepperweed (*Lepidium fremontii*)
Desert Willow (*Chilopsis Linearis*)
Four-wing Saltbush (*Triplex Canescens*)
Jojoba (*Simmondsia Chinensis*)
Mojave Aster (*Xulorhiza tortifolia*)
Mojave Yucca (*Yucca schidigera*)
Parish’s Goldeneye (*Bahiopsis parish*)
Wishbone Plant (*Mirabilis laeves*)
Woolly Brickelbush (*Brickellia incana*)

...and a handful of surprise additions!

VOLUNTEER/DOCENT MEETING

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2025 @ 5PM



The desert's natural beauty has a personal way of reaching out to all of us as individuals. This is especially true when one can then enlighten others who are looking to make the Morongo Basin their new home.

At JBWD, we have opportunities to volunteer and/or train as a Water Wise Garden Docent, all with low-key flexible schedules and minimal commitments. This important training is open to all in the Morongo Basin and is FREE.

Come join us for this one-hour meeting as we ramp-up in preparation for our spring activities that include:

- Spring Native Plant Sale (Sunday, March 30th)
- MUSD classrooms in the garden /5th Graders (early April/date TBD)
- MBCA Landscape Tours (Sunday, April 27th)
- La Contenta Middle School Water Education Festival (May 8th)
- and more!

NEW AND RETURNING VOLUNTEERS AND DOCENTS ARE WELCOME!
Please RSVP your interest to attend by February 19th by emailing Kathleen at kjradnich@gmail.com, or by leaving a voice message at 760.218.2822.

FEBRUARY: National Invasive Species Week (2/24-2/28)

Invasive plants steal water from our native plants, as well as create a “carpet” of flammable brush when they dry out, endangering us all.

This is the time of year to be vigilant in eradicating the spring invasive sprouts found popping up everywhere before they go to seed. A few of the common non-native invasive plants are pictured below:



Fountain Grass



Puncture Vine



Tree of Heaven



Red Brome



Russian Thistle



Cheat Grass



Tamarisk/Saltcedar

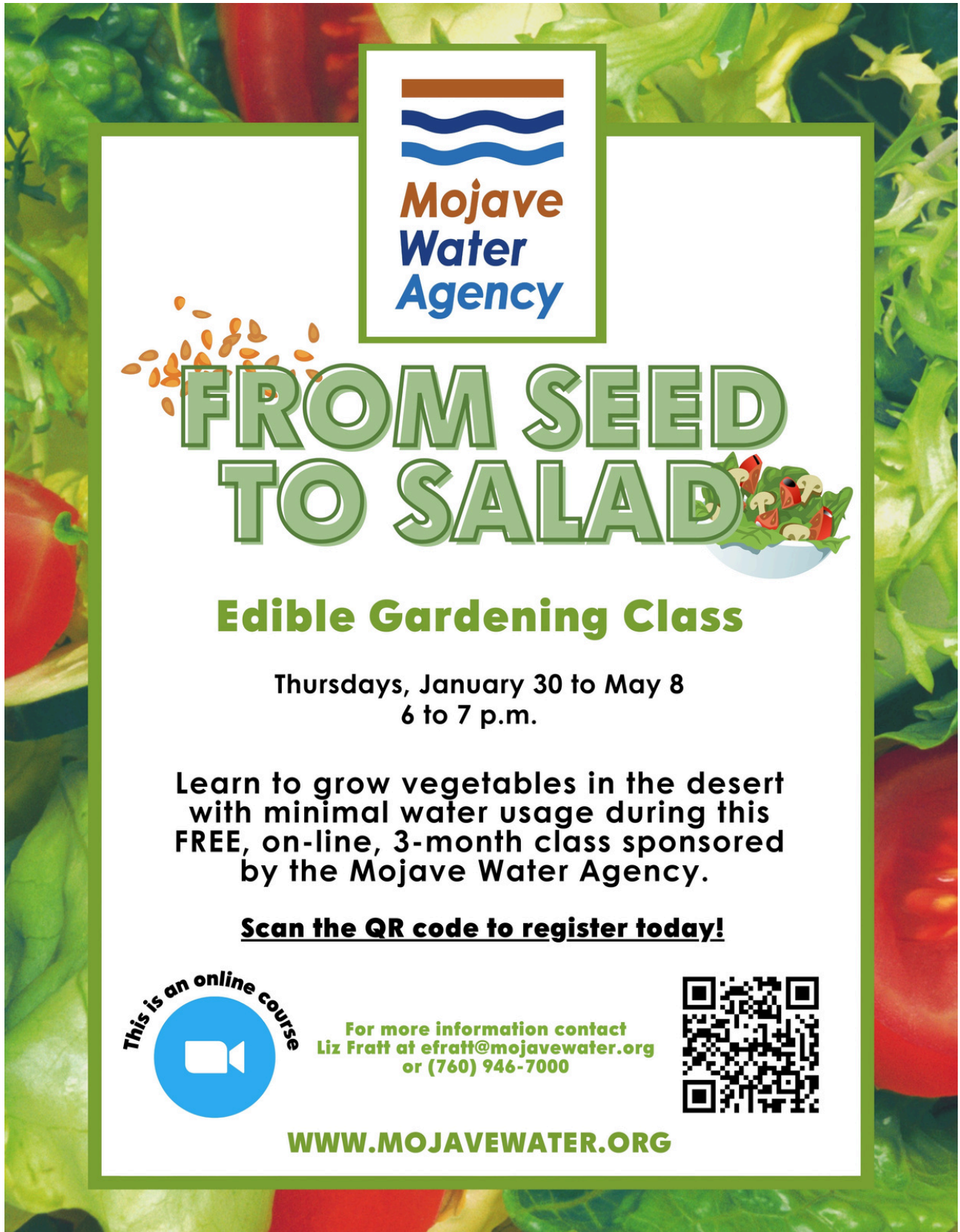



Sahara Mustard

To learn how to identify the above invasive plants, or to become familiar with a host of other invasive plants that are calling the Morongo Basin their new home, visit: calflora.org

Desert Edible Gardening Course


**Note: Late registrations are welcome at any time!*





**Mojave
Water
Agency**

FROM SEED TO SALAD




Edible Gardening Class

Thursdays, January 30 to May 8
6 to 7 p.m.


Learn to grow vegetables in the desert with minimal water usage during this **FREE**, on-line, 3-month class sponsored by the Mojave Water Agency.

Scan the QR code to register today!

This is an online course



For more information contact
Liz Fratt at efratt@mojavewater.org
or (760) 946-7000



WWW.MOJAVEWATER.ORG

WONDERS *Of* WATER

NATIVE PLANTS

Cuttings & Propagation Class

Don't have the patience to start native plants from seed? "Cuttings" are an alternative method of propagation for some native plants. Learn more in this FREE in-person & online course.

This course will cover:

- ✓ What is propagation?
- ✓ Different methods
- ✓ Identifying different plants
- ✓ How to grow from cuttings
- ✓ Xeriscaping techniques



Taught by Tony Walters of the
Mojave Desert Resource
Conservation District

March 4 at 5:30 p.m.

Register Now



www.mojavewater.org 

760-946-7054 