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RWA Launches Water-Smart Garden Contest *Front Yard Makeover is Top Prize in Second Annual Event*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The Regional Water Authority (RWA) and local water providers today announced the return of a popular contest aimed at showcasing the beauty of water-wise landscapes in the Sacramento region. The second annual Ultimate “Be Water Smart” Garden Makeover Contest opens today and culminates in a \$40,000 front yard makeover for the grand-prize winner.

The makeover, which will transform a thirsty yard into an attractive model of water efficiency, will feature a custom water-smart landscape designed by Cheryl Buckwalter of Landscape Liaisons as well as equipment and services donated by RWA’s partners.

Runner-up prizes include a professionally designed, custom water-wise landscape plan by Joseph Pattin of Garden Retreats, and two trees in 24-inch boxes chosen for the winner’s location using the “River-Friendly Landscaping Guidelines” published by the Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership.

Key contest sponsors include Landscape Liaisons, Garden Retreats, Atlas Disposal, Roseville Shade Tree Program, Pavestone, Bedrock Pavestone, Curb Pro, Capital Nursery and photographer Michelle McKnight.

The contest is aimed at helping local homeowners save water and money by incorporating water-wise gardening concepts such as low-water use plants and trees into their landscaping. Outdoor water use accounts for more than half of all residential water use in the region.

Last year's winning makeover of a front yard in Folsom drew rave reviews and introduced many residents to the idea of attractive, water-efficient landscapes. More than 700 contest entries were received.

“Water-wise landscaping doesn't have to be cactus, as we demonstrated with last year's contest,” RWA Chair Joe Dion said. “If we can encourage more people to be water-smart in their yards and gardens, it will help our region save water and energy.”

Homeowners can enter the contest by completing an entry form that also signs them up for a free Water Wise House Call. To be eligible for the grand prize, entrants must sign up for and complete a free Water Wise House Call with their water provider. During the house call, a trained water efficiency professional will visit the customer's home free of charge to check the irrigation system and provide a custom watering schedule. If requested by the customer, the trained professional will also check indoor plumbing fixtures for leaks and provide free water-saving materials and devices.

For more information about Water Wise House Calls, please call the “Be Water Smart” Hotline at 888-WTR-TIPS (888-987-8477).

Entry forms can be downloaded at www.rwah2o.org and mailed by June 16 to “Be Water Smart” – the Ultimate Water Smart Garden Makeover Contest, 2729 Prospect Park Drive, Suite 220, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670.

RWA is a joint powers authority representing 22 water providers in the greater Sacramento area. Its primary mission is to help its members protect and enhance the reliability, availability, affordability and quality of water resources. For more information, see www.rwah2o.org.

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