DROP YOUR WATER USE!

Tucson is Educating Consumers to Drop their Water Use . . .

The Tucson office of the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) has developed a new pilot program, **Drop Your Water Use**, to educate retail nursery customers on how to plan and maintain a healthy and water efficient landscape.

The program is a voluntary collaboration between ADWR and local nurseries that uses a simple water drop system to identify plants with similar water requirements. Plants are labeled one through three, distinguished with corresponding water drops and numbers.

All of the labeled plants are Xeriscape plants currently on the Tucson AMA -Low Water Use/ Drought Tolerant plant list. The one through three numbering system correlates with the plant list.

A "number one" indicates very low water use mostly native Sonoran and Chihuahuan desert plants,

Two is low water use,

Three is moderate water use.

By choosing plants with the same number a gardener can more successfully group plants by water needs.

Although the plants are all low-water-using, the frequency that they need to be irrigated varies from approximately once a week to once a month after the plants are established (in about 2-3 years). ADWR hopes that consumers will use separate valves on their irrigation system to water each zone and irrigate trees separately, enabling them to manage their irrigation water use more efficiently.

To date, fourteen Tucson retail nurseries and all six Tucson area Home Depot's have signed up for the program. ADWR is working with other nurseries to encourage them to participate.Wholesale nurseries in Phoenix and Tucson are also participating in the program by adding water drop symbols to the labels on plants to be sold in Tucson.

Retail nurseries that participate receive free posters, water drop stickers for their signage and handouts for their customers explaining the program and watering guidelines. In addition all participating nurseries will be listed on the ADWR website and will be promoted in press releases and at community events.

Anyone interested in more information or Tucson nurseries that would like to sign up for the program should contact Christina Bickelmann, Water Conservation Specialist for the Tucson ADWR office @ (520) 770-3816 or email: clbickelmann@adwr.state.az.us.