

EDH community garden uses recycled water for irrigation



In June, residents of the Four Seasons active adult community in El Dorado Hills celebrated the completion of the first phase of their new community garden, including the use of recycled water to irrigate the plants.

Key community members working to make the garden a reality included Pat Ghiglieri, garden committee chair and site supervisor for EID; Ron Bianchetti, Four Seasons home owners' association board president; and Albert Hazbun, who authored the engineer's report and developed the garden requirement materials.

EID recycled water coordinator **Doug Venable**, senior environmental compliance officer **Marty Johnson**, and recycled water compliance inspector **Tim Webster**, worked closely with the developer and residents to ensure compliance with state requirements. Doug and Marty were on hand to represent the District at the event.

"This is such a great project," said Venable, "one of only a couple like it in the state. It's been a pleasure working with the community members and the developer to make this space a reality."

The garden has raised planting beds for easy disabled access and 16-foot square plots that residents can use to grow vegetables, herbs and flowers. Phase two, already in the works, will add an orchard, rose garden, and small vineyard to the site.

In California, recycled water is authorized for use on all edible food crops. Farms in the Central Valley use more than 150 billion gallons of recycled water for edible food crops every year.

Recycled water at El Dorado Irrigation District

Since the late 1970s, EID has maintained separate irrigation and reclamation distribution systems in El Dorado Hills. Initially the system provided secondary-treated recycled water to the El Dorado Hills Executive Golf Course and the Wetsel-Oviatt construction yard.

In late 1989, EID reached an agreement with the Serrano Partners to develop a recycled water system from the Deer Creek wastewater treatment plant.

Since that time, EID has upgraded the El Dorado Hills wastewater treatment plant to produce disinfected tertiary recycled water for unrestricted use. The recycled water is continuously monitored to meet or exceed state standards.

In 2004, the EID Board of Directors mandated the use of recycled water for all new subdivisions and developments in the recycled water service area.

Currently, the two plants produce more than 1 billion gallons of recycled water each year for almost 4000 customers and businesses in the El Dorado Hills community.

The California Water Code (§§ 13550 – 13556) declares that the use of drinking water for landscape irrigation is a "...waste or an unreasonable use of water..." EID's recycled water program utilizes recycled water to save a lot of that drinking water.