

Host a **Ditch Your Lawn!** Workshop

In 2015, CNPS partnered with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to offer statewide “Ditch Your Lawn!” workshops, with the goal of training homeowners how to replace their lawns with native landscapes. With support from DWR, a team of CNPS staff and volunteers developed the curriculum, PowerPoint presentations, and handouts for the workshops. We would now like to offer these materials to CNPS chapters, so that volunteers can easily hold “Ditch Your Lawn!” workshops as local chapter events around California, using the statewide materials developed for this program.

The benefits of hosting Ditch Your Lawn as a chapter event include:

- Engaging members of the community who wouldn't normally know of CNPS
- Signing up new members for your chapter
- Increasing attendance at your chapter plant sales
- Fundraising for your chapter, if you'd like to charge for admission
- Providing education to the community and promoting native plants
- Promoting a healthier environment through the use of native plants

This guide will help you determine what you'll need to plan and prepare to host a successful workshop!

***Have questions or need more info?**

For **logistics**, contact Becky Reilly, Events Coordinator, breilly@cnps.org

For **content**, contact Caroline Garland, Horticulture Coordinator, cgarland@cnps.org

Course Materials & Handouts

Curriculum

The detailed outline for the workshop content that is provided to instructors to prepare for the workshop. Developed for statewide use. E-mail Becky/Caroline for the latest version.

“Ditch Your Lawn!” PowerPoint Presentation

PowerPoint presentation for instructor(s) to use as a visual aid in the workshop.

Developed for statewide use; may require some customization by chapter for local area. E-mail Becky/Caroline for the latest version.

Regional Plant List Handout

A list of regionally appropriate plants that represent the local flora, and have ornamental value in the landscape. It is helpful to include plant characteristics, growing requirements, and wildlife value.

Local chapter develops. E-mail Becky/Caroline for examples done by other chapters, or to see if any nearby chapters have a plant list that applies to your area.

Rain Garden Zones Plant List Handout

Plants that grow well in different areas of terraced gardens based on water needs.

Northern CA and Southern CA versions developed for statewide use. Available to download from:

<http://cnps.org/cnps/education/workshops/lawn.php>

Lawn Removal Options Handout

Covers different methods of removing turf before planting natives.

Developed for statewide use. Available to download from: <http://cnps.org/cnps/education/workshops/lawn.php>

Sheet Mulching for Native Plant Gardens

Sheet mulching methods to promote healthy soils specifically for native plants.

Developed by Charlotte Torgovitsky (CNPS Marin County Chapter & Home Ground Habitat Nursery), available for statewide use with appropriate credit given. Available to download from: <http://cnps.org/cnps/education/workshops/lawn.php>



Ditch Your Lawn!

Sheet Mulching for Fertile Soils

Sheet mulching methods to promote healthy soils for gardening.

Developed by Charlotte Torgovitsky (CNPS Marin County Chapter & Home Ground Habitat Nursery), available for statewide use with appropriate credit given. Available to download from: <http://cnps.org/cnps/education/workshops/lawn.php>

Where to Buy Native Plants

A list of nurseries, distributors, and plant sales in the local area, as well as mail order options, that carry native plants and seeds.

Local chapter develops, but lists already developed may be appropriate and/or a good starting point. E-mail Becky/Caroline to see if there is a pre-existing list with any crossover to your area, and for examples done by other chapters.

Local Landscape Professionals

A list of recommended local landscapers with experience converting lawns to natives can be helpful for those who would prefer to hire a professional.

Local chapter develops.

Feedback Survey

It's always a good idea to get feedback from your attendees at the end of your event to continue to improve the program.

Developed for statewide use but can be customized. E-mail Becky/Caroline for the latest version.

Workshop Supplies

You will want to make sure to have...

- Folders for handouts
- Nametags for attendees
- Projector and projection screen
- Laptop for presenter/presentation
- Extension cords/power strips
- Laser pointer/presenter remote to advance slides
- Microphone/PA system
- Printed directional signs to guide arriving attendees to the meeting room (and tape to hang them with)
- CNPS/chapter brochures and handouts
- A card reader for any merchandise sales or paid onsite registrations and memberships

Snacks & Refreshments

For about 35-40 attendees, we suggest:

- Box of 50 cookies from Safeway or Costco (\$5-\$6/box)
- 5-6 boxes of granola/protein bars (30-36 total); a gluten-free option is nice to accommodate those with dietary restrictions
- Fruit – ex: 1 bag of apples
- 2.5-gallon jug of water
- Paper cups
- Napkins
- Platters/bowls to hold snacks

Tips & Things To Do

Select a date and confirm a venue

- Since these are public-facing workshops, weekends tend to draw the largest crowds
- Consider timing of planting seasons and when people should be planning their projects – for example, you may want to host a late summer workshop for early fall planting

Ditch Your Lawn!

- Schedule workshops before fall and spring plant sales take place, so workshop participants have the option to source their new plants from your chapter plant sales
- 50 participants is usually a good maximum capacity for the workshop – larger classes are more difficult to teach and maintain engagement
- Having the room set up classroom-style (i.e., all participants seated at tables and chairs, facing the front of the room) is most comfortable for attendees to be able to take notes
- Consider availability of A/V (projector, screen, microphone, internet)
- These workshops typically last about 3 hours (no more than 4), including Q&A

Find an instructor/instructors

- You may want one super-knowledgeable instructor, or several speakers to split up presenting different parts of the curriculum. Local experts are best – people who know what gardening methods work best in your region, and can answer questions about the local conditions and process of removing turf and creating a native plant landscape
- Provide them with the curriculum, presentation, and handouts early with plenty of time to prepare

Customize materials

- Build a plant list, if you don't have one already (start at <http://calscape.cnps.org>)
- Build a nursery list, if you don't have one already
- If you'd like, build a list of local landscape professionals to recommend to participants
- Tweak the presentation with your instructor(s) to customize it for your area
- Tweak other handouts so they are appropriate for your area

Create a budget and set registration pricing

- We encourage offering Ditch Your Lawn workshops for free to the community, but you may elect to use them as a fundraiser for your chapter, or to at least cover your costs of putting the workshop on
- Consider: cost of the venue, if your instructor(s) require an honorarium, cost of printing handouts, purchasing folders and nametags for attendees, refreshments, any paid advertising

Promote

- Create a flyer and/or write-up ad copy
- Advertise on local media (local NPR, newspapers, community websites, etc.)
- Post flyers in community locations (e.g., parks, nature centers, coffee shops)
- E-mail to your chapter mailing list
- Post on the CNPS events calendar (<http://cnps.org/cnps/horticulture/calendar/index.php>)
- Post on social media (Facebook, MeetUp, etc.)
- Share with local gardening clubs

Prep materials and supplies

- Shop for refreshments and other supplies
- Print handouts, including evaluations, and stuff folders
- Print signage
- Prepare talking points to introduce the workshop, CNPS, and the speaker(s) to the audience

Host the workshop!

- The week before, touch base with your instructor(s), volunteers, and venue to make sure everything is good to go
- If pre-registering attendees, send a reminder e-mail with the date, time, and location, and any special directions or information about parking
- On the day of, arrive early to set up refreshments and folders, troubleshoot A/V, and make sure the room is set up correctly
- Have your instructor(s) give the class breaks whenever it is natural
- Sell CNPS books and chapter merchandise, etc., if you'd like
- Answer questions about being a CNPS member and sign up new members
- Collect feedback at the end and let the state office know how it went!