**Primetime News**

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Fall Coupon

The San Antonio Water System (SAWS) is offering another incentive to convert turf grass to low water-use landscape. You have until Nov. 30 to participate.

The idea is to convert 200 or 400 square feet of your lawn to a low water-use landscape by killing or removing the grass and planting low water-use plants. To help cover the cost of the plants, SAWS will provide a $100 or $200 coupon to use toward the purchase of the plants.

SAWS provides a step-by-step process to qualify for the coupon.

Step 1 is called “Get Rid of the Grass.” The easiest way is using a contact herbicide such as Round-Up, but you can also dig up the grass or try to kill it with six layers of newspaper with mulch over the top. Also, cap any sprinkler heads in the area as part of Step 1.

Step 2 is “Get the Coupon.” To get a coupon, visit the SAWS website at [www.saws.org/](http://www.saws.org/) and complete the application. SAWS will send you a coupon to use at one of the participating nurseries: Milberger’s, Rainbow Gardens or Fanick's.

Step 3 is to “Go Shopping.” You have to buy 15 plants from the sun or shade categories. The requirement is seven small plants, seven medium plants and one large plant.

In the sun category, the small plants include autumn sage, rosemary and lavender. Medium plants include artemisia, knockout rose or yucca/agave. For a large plant, select from esperanza, mutabilis rose or prickly pear.

In the shade category, the seven small plants can be selected from asparagus fern, cedar sage or yucca/agave. Choose from cast iron plant, shrimp and Turk’s cap for your seven medium plants. The large plant choice must come from split-leaf philodendron, Texas persimmon or yaupon holly.

Step 4 is to “Plant and Mulch.” Mulch can be organic or inorganic. It does not have to be purchased at the same nursery providing the plants as it was in the spring program.

Other changes from the spring SAWS coupon program include a requirement that the medium and large plants be purchased in a 1-gallon or larger size container.

The fall program is better than the spring one in my eyes because of the plant choice. The tough modern roses such as “Knockout” and old-fashioned roses such as mutabilis (also called butterfly rose) are versatile landscape plants. They are drought-tolerant and pest-resistant in addition to providing blooms over an eight to nine month period every year. Keep in mind that mutabilis is a very large plant for a rose. It will grow 8 feet tall and 10 feet around.

In the shade selections, shrimp plant and Turk’s cap are excellent choices. Both attract hummingbirds and provide a long season of blooms (six months) in the shade.

Shrimp plant grows to about 3 feet tall. There are two color versions, the cerulean rust colored bloom and a showy light yellow bloom. Shrimp plant used to be on deer-proof lists but it is eaten now during droughts in my neighborhood.

There are two Turk’s caps. The native version grows to about 3 and a half feet tall and produces small red flowers. The exotic version grew to 8 feet tall and 8 feet around at the Schultz House garden. It had red blooms that were quarter size.

Yaupon holly is offered as a large plant for the shade. It can grow to make a tree 25 feet tall or be pruned to any size and shape you need to fit your landscape. It is an evergreen with small red berries that are showy in the winter until after the first freeze when the birds eat them.

**Garden Tasks**

Plant your snapdragons, stocks, dianthus and calendulas now for winter and spring color.

It is also an excellent time to plant shade trees and shrubs. The plants have time to develop a root system before the hot weather arrives.

Fertilize the lawn with “winterizer” fertilizer for winter cold resistance and fast green up in the spring.

Spread wildflower seed over sunny areas where the seed can reach the soil. The seed will not work in sods or heavily weeded sites.