

Valley Community Newspapers, Inc.

Community News in Your Hands

Carmichael neighbors earn their 'blue thumb'

Special to the Arden-Carmichael News

Carmichael residents came together Saturday, October 13 to improve a neighbor's front yard while learning sustainable landscaping during a free hands-on workshop and "Garden Party." // Photos courtesy



Carmichael residents came together Saturday, October 13 to improve a neighbor's front yard while learning sustainable landscaping during a free hands-on workshop and "Garden Party."

Part of the Blue Thumb Neighbors program, landscape designer Cheryl Buckwalter and irrigation specialist Don Smith taught participants how

to replace water-wasting lawn sprinklers with more efficient ones, install in-line irrigation and plant beautiful, low-water use flowers and plants.

Darren, a Carmichael Water District employee, adjusts a sprinkler head.



After the instruction, participants dug in to create a beautiful result—new irrigation, flowers and plants that are both attractive and water smart.

The hands-on Garden Party was the final element of Blue Thumb Neighbors, a free program that teaches participants how to create beautiful, River-Friendly landscapes. River-Friendly landscaping is a holistic approach to sustainable landscaping that uses resources, like water, efficiently and incorporates practices that foster soil health, reduce waste and prevent pollution of the air and waterways.

Each of Carmichael's 58 participating households received a

free at-home consultation on efficient watering sponsored by the Carmichael Water District, as well as resource kits and education during three September workshops on sustainable landscape design, efficient watering and selecting beautiful low-water use plants. Two participants won weather-based “smart” irrigation controllers donated by Rain Bird and Hunter for completing all program components.

During the program participants learned that more than 60 percent of a household’s water use occurs in the landscape. Of that, it’s estimated that more than 30 percent is wasted due to overwatering and evaporation. They learned how to program their sprinkler systems to deliver just the amount of water plants need and about low-water use plants that are especially suited to thrive in the Sacramento region. Volunteer instructors included Buckwalter of design firm Landscape Liaisons, Smith of the City of Folsom and Ellen Zagory of the U.S. Davis Arboretum.

“Carmichael Water District is thrilled by the number of participants who embraced this truly valuable



program,” said CWD Public Information Officer Chris Nelson. “Our water use affects the beautiful American River and our local streams that help make Carmichael unique. When we use more water in our landscape, we leave less in our waterways to support fish, plants, wildlife and recreation. Blue Thumb Neighbors teaches us how to be good stewards so there is enough water for all.”

Blue Thumb Neighbors is sponsored by the Regional Water Authority, which includes 22 water providers in the Sacramento region, including Carmichael Water District. The program was offered in partnership with the Carmichael Creek Neighborhood Association. For information about bringing Blue Thumb Neighbors to your community, contact your local water provider or Blue Thumb Neighbors Program Coordinator Christine Kohn at 916-944-1631.