

## Learning to Grow a Lush Fall Garden

Students at Ford Elementary School recently learned some fall planting and water-saving techniques from waterSmart – a program of the Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority and Cobb County Water System.

### *Fall Planting Tips from waterSmart:*

- **Fertilize Less** – If fertilizer is needed, pick a slow-release, nitrogen-based formula, such as sulfur-coated urea, urea formaldehyde, IBDU (isobutylene-diurea) or methylene urea. Make sure to check the application rate on the label – this rate is ideal when planting but should be reduced once plants are established.
- **Mulch** – Use mulch to maintain moisture in soil. Pine bark, nuggets and hardwood chips are best. Another helpful hint – saturate a newspaper and place it on the ground before using mulch. By preventing the soil from drying out, mulch helps plants stay hydrated longer between rainfalls.
- **Building Tolerance** – Native plants are generally designed to withstand the local climate and environmental conditions with only a small amount of additional watering and less fertilizer and pesticides. To ensure a waterSmart yard, choose plants that are native to the area and drought resistant. Dogwoods, azaleas and hollies are well-suited for the metro Atlanta region, but appropriately planted non-native plants can thrive as well.

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<http://acworth.patch.com/groups/schools/p/watersmart-visits-ford-elementary-gives-fall-planting-tips>