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The City of Burleson hosted its first Texas SmartScape yard contest this summer and two residents tied for first place.

Derald Freeman (James Circle) and John and Paula Brehm (Country Vista Circle) tied for first place. They each won \$100. Paige King's yard (Rock Springs Drive) came in second place and included a \$75 reward. Julio Vega's SmartScape yard (Post Oak Lane) came in third. Vega took home \$25.

Texas SmartScape® is an interactive "how to" guide that teaches North Central Texas residents the SmartScape® concepts of landscaping with native and adapted plants, which promote water conservation and require little or no pesticides or fertilizers to thrive. A yard that is "smart" for Texas doesn't have to mean rocks and cactus. Photographs, landscaping design tools, and a searchable plant database are integrated in the interactive SmartScape® web site.

Whether you're in the market for a major landscape overhaul or just a few quick fixes to save water, Texas SmartScape® has the tools, including four simple steps to put your yard on a budget. Those steps include:

- Water early or late (it is against City of Burleson code to use a sprinkler system to water your lawn between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., year round). Fifty percent of your irrigation can be lost to evaporation, especially if you use misting sprinklers.
- Water less frequently. Most lawns only need watering once every five-seven days in the growing season and every 15-20 days in the winter. If it rains, you may be able to water even less.
- Install drip irrigation in flower beds and at the roots of shrubs. Drip irrigation delivers almost 95 percent of the water to plants. Installing drip irrigation doesn't have to be costly. Soaker hoses can be purchased for less than \$15 at the local hardware store.
- Use mulch. Place a 3-inch layer of organic mulch around plants and on top of the soil in flower beds. This will hold in water to keep the soil moist longer.

For more information as well as pictures of the winning yards, click on Texas SmartScape on the City of Burleson web site by going to www.burlesontx.com, clicking on "Departments" at the top of the page, then clicking on "Environmental Services."