

Water, Water, Everywhere

Water is our most precious natural resource. Without it, life ceases. A typical household uses about 260 gallons of water per day. But in summer months, the amount of water used outdoors by a household can exceed the amount used for all other purposes for the entire year.

Gardening and lawn care account for the majority of this seasonal increase, but other outdoor activities, such as washing cars and filling swimming pools also contribute.

What is Water-Efficient Landscaping?

Eye-catching gardens and landscapes that save water, prevent pollution and protect the environment are, in fact, easily achieved by employing water-efficient landscaping.

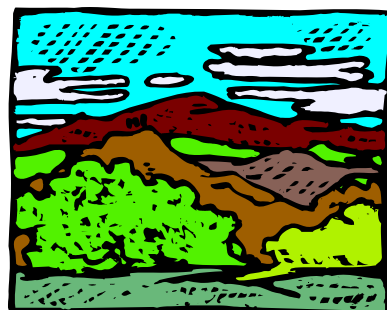


Fundamentals of Water-wise Landscaping

There are eight (8) fundamentals of water-wise landscaping:

- ❖ Proper planning and design – Developing a landscape plan is the first and most important step in creating a water-efficient landscape, and should take into account regional climate, topography, existing vegetation, intended use of the property and the grouping of plants by their water needs

- ❖ Soil analysis and improvement - Test your soil prior to beginning any landscaping improvements.
- ❖ Appropriate plant selection – Your landscape design should take into account your local climate as well as soil conditions. Preserve as many existing trees and shrubs as possible. Choose plants native to your region.
- ❖ Practical turf areas – How and where turf is placed in the landscape can significantly reduce the amount of irrigation water needed to support the landscape
- ❖ Efficient irrigation – Efficient irrigation is a very important part of using water efficiently outdoors and applies in any landscaping
- ❖ Use of mulches – Mulches aid in greater water retention by minimizing evaporation, reducing weed growth, moderating soil temperatures and preventing erosion. In addition, organic mulches also improve the condition of your soil as they decompose
- ❖ Appropriate maintenance – Water and fertilize plants only as needed. Cut turf grass only when it reached a height of 2 to 3 inches. Avoid pruning plants and giving them high nitrogen fertilizers during dry periods



Why use Water-efficient Landscaping?

Proper landscaping techniques not only create beautiful landscapes, but also benefit the environment and save water. In addition, attractive, water-efficient, low-maintenance landscapes can increase property values.

Water-efficient landscaping offers many economic and environmental benefits, including:

- ❖ Lower water bills from reduced water consumption;
- ❖ Conservation of natural resources and preservation of habitat for plant and wildlife such as fish and waterfowl;
- ❖ Decreased energy use (and air pollution associated with its generation) because less pumping and treatment of water is required;
- ❖ Reduced home and office heating and cooling cost through the careful placement of trees and plants;
- ❖ Reduced runoff of stormwater and irrigation water that carries top soils, fertilizers and pesticides into lakes, rivers and streams;
- ❖ Fewer yard trimmings to be managed or land filled;
- ❖ Reduced landscaping labor and maintenance costs;
- ❖ Extended life for water resources infrastructure (e.g. reservoirs, treatment plants, groundwater aquifers), thus reduced taxpayer costs.

Water-efficient Landscape Irrigation Methods

With common watering practices, a large portion of the water applied to lawns and gardens is not absorbed by the plants. The goal of efficient irrigation is to apply only as much water as is needed to keep your plants healthy.

To promote the strong root growth that supports a plant during drought, water deeply and only when the plant needs water. Irrigation with consideration to the type of soil, the condition of your plants, the season and weather conditions – rather than on a fixed watering schedule - significantly increases your watering efficiency. When planning your garden, group plants according to their watering needs.

Manual watering with a hand-held hose tends to be the most water efficient method of irrigation. Soaker hoses can also be very efficient when used correctly.

If you use an automatic system, consider installing a rain sensor to prevent the system from turning on during or immediately after a rain. Soil moisture sensors will allow your system to turn on only if the soil moisture drops below a certain level.



Efficient irrigation will ensure that you enjoy the Green, Green Grass of Home.

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