

WATERWISE LANDSCAPING

Outdoor watering can account for 50 to 80 percent of home water use in the spring and summer. This may be wasted through poor choice of plant materials and inefficient landscape watering practices, including runoff. By transitioning to a waterwise landscape, you can reduce your daily water use and lower your monthly water bill while creating an outdoor oasis. Here are some steps to help you transform your lawn into a waterwise landscape.

- 1 PLANNING**
Create a master landscape plan for reference. Consider your site's daily sun exposure and soil drainage. Group plants based on water and sunlight requirements.
- 2 SOIL HEALTH**
Get your soil tested, and amend it accordingly. All soils will benefit from the addition of organic matter. This will increase your soil's aeration and ability to absorb and store water. Till in four to six inches of fully composted organic material each time you replant annual beds.
- 3 TURF GRASS**
Choose a low-water-use variety of grass. Consider reducing the amount of turf grass in your landscape. Most turf grasses require about one inch of water per week to survive. Maintain your turf to increase its water efficiency. Mow at the correct height, fertilize, and extract weeds.
- 4 EFFICIENT IRRIGATION**
Water in the morning or evening to avoid evaporation and wind drift. Check your system often to ensure all spray heads are working and that your system is not creating runoff. Turn your system off during wet weather or freezing temperatures. For flower beds, use drip irrigation or soaker hoses where appropriate. Consider collecting rainwater for use in your flower beds.
- 5 PLANT SELECTION**
Review your landscape plan, and choose plants based on the area where they will be planted. Native or adaptive plants usually require less water and maintenance. Check the cold hardiness of the plants you are considering. Not all Texas native plants will withstand our cold winters. (Check out the back of this page for plant suggestions)
- 6 MULCH**
Mulch helps reduce the amount of moisture evaporated from the soil, reduces annual weed populations, prevents soil compaction, and moderates soil temperatures. Maintain a three to four-inch layer of mulch year-round. Use organic mulches like compost, straw, or wood chips. As these deteriorate, they will add organic matter to the soil.
- 7 MAINTENANCE**
Keep weed populations at bay; they compete for water and sunlight. Take care of diseases and pests, as they can inhibit a plant's ability to intake water. Healthy plants use water more efficiently, so fertilize turf grass and other plants. Water your plants deeply and less frequently to encourage healthy root systems. Replenish mulch in the fall and spring.

WATERWISE PLANTS

Be sure you read the label before buying a plant. Make sure it is a drought-tolerant or low-water use variety. Check the plant's sunlight and soil drainage requirements. If you're purchasing a perennial, shrub, or tree, ensure it will withstand our freezing temperatures. The plants listed below are not the only waterwise plants that can be grown in our area; these are just some of our favorites.

GRASSES

Ornamental:

- Feather Reed Grass
- Northern Sea Oats
- Pampas Grass
- Purple Fountain Grass
- Sand Lovegrass
- Switch Grass

Turf Grass:

- Bermuda Grass (certain varieties)
- Buffalo Grass

Rangeland:

- Grama
- Blue Stem

TREES

- American Smoketree
- Austrian Pine
- Chinese Pistache
- Hackberry
- Hawthorn
- Lacebark Elm
- Prairie Flameleaf Sumac
- Southern Catalpa
- Texas Red Oak
- Texas Redbud
- Thornless Honeylocust
- Vitex
- Western Soapberry

PERENNIALS

- Agastache (Hyssop)
- Artemisia
- Blackfoot Daisy
- Catmint
- Delosperma
- Dianthus
- Evening Primrose
- Flame Acanthus
- Gallardia
- Gaura
- Jupiter's Beard
- Lavender
- Mexican Bush Sage
- Red Yucca
- Rosemary
- Saliva Greggii
- Texas Sage
- Turks Cap
- Yarrow
- Zexmenia

GROUNDCOVERS

- Bishop's Weed
- Hardy Plumbago
- Purple Heart
- Santolina
- Sedums

VINES

- Honeysuckle
- Passion Vine
- Silver Lace Vine
- Sweet Autumn Clematis

WILDFLOWERS

- American Basketflower
- Chocolate Daisy
- Copper Globe Mallow
- Indian Blanket
- Plains Fleabane
- Prairie Coneflower
- Prairie Verbena
- Purple Prairie Clover
- Tahoka Daisy
- White Prickly Poppy

RAINWATER HARVESTING

Collecting rainwater is a great way to offset your reliance on municipal and groundwater supplies. A catchment system can be as simple as a bucket under the eaves of a roof or as complex as gutters that channel rainwater into tanks. Tanks range in capacity, from 50 to 5,000 gallons or more. Passive rainwater collection can also be accomplished by adding bioswales, rain gardens, or other depressions to collect water in your landscape. Check out rainwater.tamu.edu for more information.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Contact your local Master Gardeners for plant selections and gardening tips for your area.

State-wide water, landscape and plant selection resources:

- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Water University: water.tamu.edu
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Horticulture: aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu
- Texas A&M Tree Selector: texastreeplanting.tamu.edu
- Texas A&M Soil Testing: soiltesting.tamu.edu
- Texas Smartscape: txsmartscape.com
- Texas Superstar Plants: texassuperstar.com
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center: wildflower.org

Rainwater catchment and rain gardens:

- Texas Water Development Board resources: www.txdb.texas.gov/innovativewater/rainwater
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Rainwater Harvesting: rainwaterharvesting.tamu.edu