

7 Steps of Xeriscape

1. Planning & Design

Whether starting from scratch or renovating an existing landscape, good results begin with a good design. Planning begins by taking into account the existing elements of the site, how the landscape will be used and how much time will be spent on maintenance. Place moderate water zones (tree, shrubs, and flowers) between high water (lawns) and low water (decks, sidewalks) zones.

2. Evaluate and Improve the Soil

Good soil is the basis for a successful Xeriscape. Adding organic matter will improve any type of soil, clay, loam or sand. The recommended amount is 3-6 cu. yds. per 1000 square feet. Call your local Cooperative Extension Office for a soil test.

3. Limit Turf Area

Bluegrass turf should be located only where it provides a useful function, and eliminated from narrow or sloped areas where irrigation is difficult. If the only time you walk on the grass is to mow it, replace it with less water-demanding plants.



4. Water Efficiently

Well-planned and maintained sprinkler system can save water. Don't economize by stretching the head spacing -- make sure your system is spaced adequately. Don't mix the type of heads on a zone such as spray heads with rotor heads. The beds in this demonstration garden are designed according to the sprinkler head output to reduce over spray.

5. Appropriate Plants

Nurseries abound with many beautiful, low water-using plants that grow well in our climate. Plants with different heights, colors and textures create interest and beauty all year long. Grouping plants according to their needs for water is called 'hydro-zoning.' Put higher water-use plants in low lying drainage areas, near down spouts or in the shade of other plants.

6. Use mulches

Mulch covers the soil and minimizes evaporation, reduces weed growth, slows erosion, reduces temperature fluctuations of soil and gives the beds a 'finished look.' Mulch should be applied directly to the soil or over landscape fabric. Organic mulches, such as bark chips, pine needles, pole peelings, or wood shavings, improve the soil texture by slowly decomposing. Excessive rocks tend to retain heat near plants and houses.

7. Regular Maintenance

Although a Xeriscape needs regular maintenance to preserve its beauty, maintenance time is generally less than for a traditional landscape. Proper mowing, weeding, fertilizing, irrigating, dead-heading and pruning all help preserve its beauty.

Xeric Demonstration Garden

"A living example of water-wise landscaping for Northern Colorado."



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