

Water-Smart Landscaping Tips

Spring is here and it's time to consider a "water-smart" landscape.

PLANTS

Plan ahead for a water-smart landscape.

Whether you're designing a new landscape or rethinking your current one, plan your landscape for water-efficiency.

Use low water-using and native plants.

Once established, these plants require little water beyond normal rainfall and minimum fertilizer.

Group plants according to their water needs.

Grouping vegetation with similar watering needs into specific "hydrozones" reduces water use.

Recognize site conditions and plant appropriately.

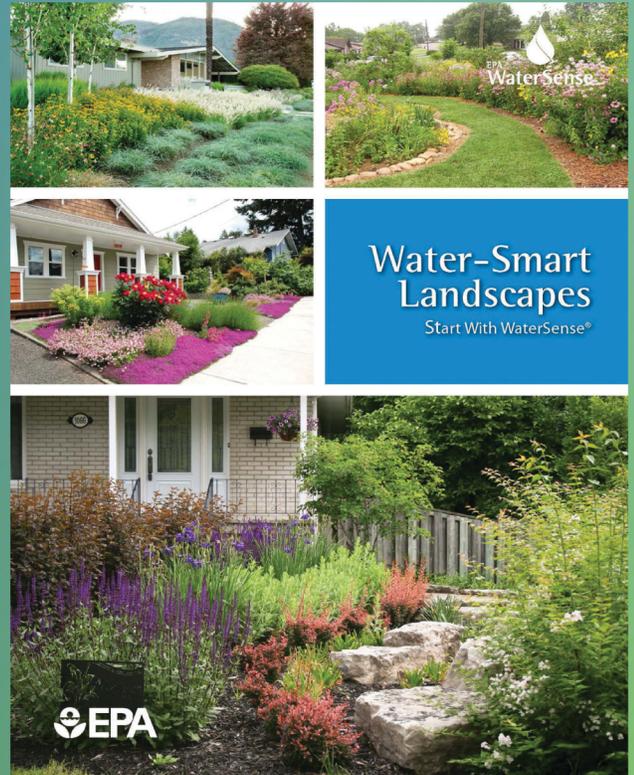
Be mindful of a site's soil type and exposure to the sun and wind, and then choose plants that are appropriate.

Place turfgrass strategically.

Turfgrass receives the highest percentage of irrigation water in traditional landscapes and homeowners commonly overwater grass areas. To reduce outdoor water use, plant turfgrass only where it has a practical function, such as a play area. Choose drought-tolerant turfgrass types that don't use a lot of water.

Minimize steep slopes.

Slopes have higher potential for erosion and runoff.



For more specific information, download the "Water-Smart Landscapes" guide from EPA's WaterSense website at www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoor/landscaping_tips.html.

SOIL

Aerate your soil.

Aerating with a simple lawn aerator can increase the infiltration of water into the ground, improving water flow to the plant's root zone and reducing runoff.

Use mulch around shrubs and garden plants.

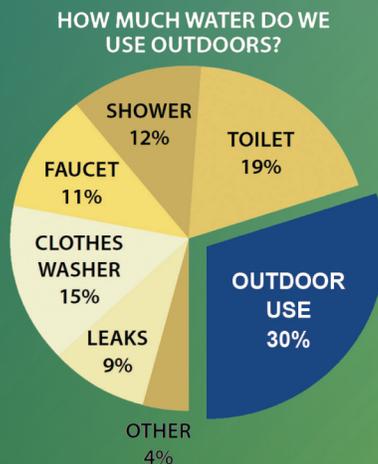
This will help to reduce evaporation, inhibit weed growth, moderate soil temperature, and prevent erosion.

Grasscycle.

Leave the grass clippings on your lawn after you mow. They will quickly decompose and release valuable nutrients back into the soil.

Keep your soil healthy.

Healthy soils effectively cycle nutrients, minimize runoff, retain water, and absorb excess nutrients, sediments and pollutants. Have your soil tested for nutrient content, pH, soil composition, and organic matter content. Contact the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service to learn about soil testing services.



MAINTENANCE

Raise your lawn mower cutting height.

Raise your lawn mower blade. Longer grass promotes deeper root growth, minimizes weed growth and reduces evaporation.

Provide regular maintenance.

Replace mulch around shrubs and garden plants, remove weeds and thatch as necessary.

Minimize or eliminate fertilizer.

Fertilizer encourages thirsty new growth, increasing your landscape's dependence upon additional water. Minimize or eliminate the use of fertilizer where possible, or use products that contain "natural organic" or "slow-release" ingredients that feed plants slowly and evenly.



WATER FOR 2060
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