

Beginners Guide to Xeriscaping



The 7 Steps to Planning and Planting a
Xeriscape Landscape in
Benton and Franklin Counties



**PRODUCED BY:
BENTON CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**



What is Xeriscaping?

Xeriscaping is landscaping with water conservation in mind. In Xeriscaping plants are grouped and planted in hydrazones. Hydrazones are areas of your yard that receive different amounts of water.



Myths of Xeriscaping

Xeriscaping True or False:

I can only plant native plants. – FALSE

(See - Step 2)

I can't have lawn as a component of my landscape. – FALSE

(See - Step 3)

I won't have to irrigate. – FALSE

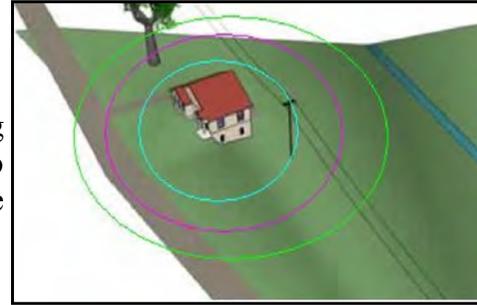
(See - Step 4)



7 Basic Principals to Implementing Xeriscaping in Your Yard

Step 1 – Planning and Design

Before you can begin buying plants for your yard you need to spend some time planning where and what you want to plant.



Take into consideration the different areas or “zones ”of your yard and how you want to use them. If the thought of designing your own landscape is overwhelming then you may want to consult a landscape architect.

Step 2 – Selecting Plant Material

When selecting plant material consider mixing native and non-native plants that will provide color, texture and the overall look you are trying to achieve. Be careful not to plant something that is invasive and that will take over your landscape and your neighbors! You also need to select and group plants based on water needs, sun exposure preference, and your soil type.



Basic Principals to Implementing Xeriscaping in Your Yard

Step 3 – Incorporating Lawn/Turf

One of the most common misconceptions is that you cannot have lawn as a component of a water conservation oriented landscape. Areas that are intended as play areas for children and pets can and should be planted to grass. When designing your landscape look for areas that are too steep to mow easily, or that are adjacent to streets, fences and/or other non-play zones and plan on planting lower water use native and non-natives in those areas.



Step 4 – Irrigation

It is important to remember that Xeriscaping does not mean that irrigation isn't a necessary component even if it is just for the establishment of new plantings. Just as plants are selected and grouped together based on their water needs the irrigation design should match your planting plan. Areas that are planted to lawn should be on a separate station/valve than planting beds or garden areas.



Step 5 – Soil Preparation

Soils in our area tend to be on the sandy side. Native plants do not require the soils to be amended. If you are planting non-native plants then you may need to amend the soil with organic matter by adding compost. Organic matter will increase the amount of water the soil can hold and over time it will help provide nutrients to growing plants. Disturbing the soil will promote weed growth, so only disturb the areas you will be planting.



Step 6 – Use of Much

Wood chips, wood shaving and rock can all be used as mulch. Mulch can be an effective tool in reducing weed growth, retaining soil moisture and reducing windblown dust. Grape pumas, the seeds of the grapes that are left over from processing of grapes from local wineries, have been used as mulch on garden pathways. This is an excellent way of recycling a natural by-product but please be warned this mulch should only be used in the Very Low / No Water Zone of your yard as grape seeds have been known to germinate.



Basic Principals to Implementing Xeriscaping in Your Yard

Step 7 – Maintenance

Although Xeriscape yards do require lower maintenance and irrigation water they are not no-maintenance landscapes. Landscape areas will still need to be periodically weeded, plants will need to be pruned and fertilized. Irrigation systems should be maintained and repaired.



Agencies and Organizations to Assist You

Benton Conservation District– Prosser

415 Wine Country Road, Prosser, WA
509-786-1923 x 3

Benton Conservation District– Kennewick

10121 W. Clearwater Ave, Kennewick, WA 99336
509-736-6000

<http://www.bentoncd.org/>

Franklin Conservation District– Pasco

1533 E. Spokane St., Suite C, Pasco, WA 99301
509-545-8546 x 4

<http://www.franklincd.org/>

Columbia Basin Chapter of the Native Plant Society

PO Box 221
Richland, WA 99352

<http://www.wnps.org/cbasin/>

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/crossing_paths

Benton Franklin County Cooperative Extension

Master Gardeners

5600-E W Canal Place
Kennewick, WA 99336
(509) 735-3551

<http://benton-franklin.wsu.edu/mg/>

Additional Resources

Publications

The Natural Way to Grow: Gardening with Native Plants of Eastern Washington,
Columbia Basin Chapter of the Native Plant Society
http://www.wnps.org/cbasin/pdf/eastern_wa_native_plants_2.pdf

Rugged Country Plants 2010 Native Plant User Guide
<http://www.ruggedcountryplants.com/native-plant-user-guide.htm>

Native Plant Nurseries and Growers with Eastern WA Natives, Columbia Basin
Chapter of the Native Plant Society
[http://www.bentoncd.org/images/archive/
Native_Plant_Nurseries_and_Growers_and_Books_2010.pdf](http://www.bentoncd.org/images/archive/Native_Plant_Nurseries_and_Growers_and_Books_2010.pdf)

Eastern Washington Garden Wise
http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/education/Eastern_Garden_Wise_Web.pdf

Websites

<http://www.xeriscapenm.com/>

http://www.xeriscapenm.com/xeriscaping_information.php

<http://www.denverwater.org/Conservation/Xeriscape/>

http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/landscaping/index.cfm/mytopic=11960

<http://www.greeleygov.com/Water/xeriscape.aspx>

<http://www.saws.org/conservation/landscape/xeriscape.shtml>

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