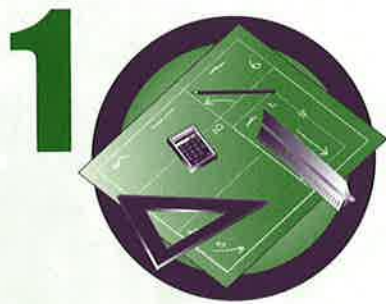


The seven principles of water-wise landscaping



Plan and design properly

Before you buy one plant or sprinkler head, plan your landscape. By planning your landscape on paper, you'll save water, time and money. A well planned design takes many factors into consideration: site analysis, needs assessment, plant selection, available water and the maintenance time and cost following installation.

Improve the soil

Make the texture of the soil richer and healthier by adding organic amendments such as compost. Amendments help increase water retention in sandy soils. They improve drainage in heavy clay, commonly found in the Inland Empire region. It may also be beneficial to raise planter areas by mounding or creating raised beds with materials such as railroad ties, recycled concrete or cement blocks.



Group plants by water need

Organize your landscape into hydrozones – groups of plants with similar water needs. Choose plant materials that are suitable to your climate. Microclimates occur where natural or man-made features, such as a house, fence or tree, modify sun and wind patterns. Get to know the microclimates that exist in your yard and take advantage of them. Plant materials with high water needs on the shady, north side of your house or fence or under the shade of a tree.

Use turf for function

Trim down areas of nonfunctional turf or grass. It's one of the thirstiest plants in the landscape. Limit turf to only those areas that are used as playing surfaces or receive heavy foot traffic. Try creative alternatives – turn a front lawn into an entry garden, use pea gravel in children's play areas, transform side yards into lush niche gardens or incorporate a forest of trees, under-plantings and a meandering, decomposed granite walkway. Visit Western's *Landscapes Southern California Style*SM to see examples of niche gardens you can create in your own landscape.





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Irrigate efficiently

A properly designed and operated irrigation system can reduce water use by 25 percent or more each year. Install the proper irrigation, schedule according to plants' needs and check your system regularly for necessary adjustments, leaks and repairs. Consider using drip irrigation for all areas other than lawns. Adjust your irrigation at least seasonally. Above all, *don't over water*. Try cutting back – you may be surprised!

Use mulch

Mulch is a layer of organic or inorganic material placed on top of the soil. A layer of mulch 3-5 inches deep will conserve water by reducing evaporation. It also helps to suppress weeds that can rob your plants of available moisture. Organic mulches are comprised of any material that was once living: composted grass clippings, shredded tree trimmings, sawdust, straw or ground bark. Inorganic mulches are nonliving materials such as pea gravel, stone or porous landscape fabric.



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Maintain appropriately

Maintenance plays a crucial role in the success of your landscape. Proper maintenance nearly guarantees plant health and contributes to resource conservation. Maintenance is not limited to occasional pruning, weeding or mowing. It's important to maintain your irrigation system as well. This includes tasks such as cleaning sprinkler screens and drip filters, readjusting sprinkler spray patterns, replacing damaged components, repairing leaks and adjusting watering schedules to meet seasonal needs.

“Creating a water-wise landscape takes planning. The time you invest, however, will be more than returned with lower water bills plus an easier to maintain, attractive yard.”

