

Xeriscape Garden

Xeriscape is a style of gardening that reduces the need for and use of irrigation in arid climates. “Xeric” is derived from a Greek word meaning dry, so Xeriscape refers to low water gardening and planting. Xeric gardening and landscaping is more of a philosophy rather than a specific style. The idea is to garden and landscape in a nature-friendly way, choosing plants that will thrive in your specific climate, with the little more water than your natural rainfall. Water conservation and thoughtful water use encourages many gardeners to implement the Xeriscape philosophy.

Our Discovery Garden sits in a high desert classified as a cold semi-arid climate where we receive about 10” of annual precipitation (as compared to the US average of 38” per year). Building a beautiful water-wise landscape includes much more than just plant selection, though we do suggest choosing native plants that have already adapted to thriving in our part of the country. There are seven principles to follow when creating a xeriscape garden:

- Plan a sound landscape design
- Limit turf (commonly referred to as lawn) to appropriate, functional areas
- Use water-efficient plants
- Install efficient irrigation
- Add soil amendments
- Use mulch
- Practice appropriate landscape maintenance

Planting to match the climate is a key ingredient to successful xeriscape technique which results in gardens less dependent on irrigation without sacrificing the beauty of the plants and landscape.

You may have noticed; the Discover Garden’s Xeric garden is part of the Pollinator Garden. Even in arid climates, attracting pollinators remains a high priority. The amount of water a plant requires does not determine if it will attract bees; the color and health of the blossoms is what will attract pollinators.

Xeriscape need not be a swath of gravel with a few large rocks and a lone cactus in the middle. Xeriscape can be lush, colorful, full of texture and visual interest. It can be a healthy, thriving garden that creates habitat for insects, bugs, little animals, birds, and all forms of life. And it can all be done with using less water, more wisely.

Website resources

<https://www.doityourself.com/stry/how-to-plant-a-xeriscape-garden>

<https://www.thespruce.com/xeriscaping-plants-a-drought-resistant-approach-2130777>

<https://www.landscapingnetwork.com/landscape-design/xeriscape.html>

Video resources

<https://www.planetnatural.com/xeric-principles/>

<https://www.paylesshardwareandrockery.com/2017/12/09/the-principles-of-the-xeriscape-system/>

Recommended books from MCPLD collection

Xeriscape Colorado: the complete guide

Xeriscape plant guide Xeriscape gardening: water conservation for the American landscape

Xeriscape handbook: a how-to guide to natural, resource-wise gardening

The xeriscape flower gardener: a waterwise guide for the Rocky Mountain region

Dry-land gardening: a xeriscaping guide for dry-summer, cold-winter climates