

Xeriscape landscaping is an approach to yard/garden design and maintenance that promotes water conservation using native and/or drought tolerant plants.

What is Xeriscape?

The basic concepts of xeriscape (pronounced zeer-i-scape) began as a way of lessening the effects of water shortages while maintaining the aesthetic qualities of the home landscape. Xeriscape is not rocks, junipers or black plastic. It includes displays of bright colors and plant diversity. Plants should be selected with cultural requirements that match the conditions in your yard.

The Seven Principles of Xeriscape

Plan and Design are important for the creation of a water-conserving landscape. Determine the existing conditions (drainage, sunny/shady areas, views, soil types, existing plants, slope and availability of water). Prioritize areas in terms of water use.

Practical Lawn Areas should be planted with a purpose and function in the landscape. Look for drought tolerant varieties of turf grasses which will require less mowing, watering and fertilizing.

Appropriate Plants need to be grouped together according to their water needs. Large areas of plants with low water needs will allow the maximum water conservation.

Soil Improvement with organic matter, such as compost or manure, can improve root development as well as water penetration and retention.

Mulches should be used around plants to reduce watering needs, reduce weed growth, slow erosion and help prevent soil temperature fluctuations. Avoid any solid plastic which prevents water penetration and aeration.

Efficient Irrigation with a properly designed and maintained system will save water. Turf areas should be irrigated separately from shrub beds. Irrigate according to the condition and needs of the plants, not on a fixed schedule. Avoid overspray and runoff.

Appropriate Maintenance -- proper mowing, pruning, weeding, fertilizing, and irrigating will contribute to the sustainability of this landscape.

The principles of Xeriscape will ensure an attractive, healthy landscape with the use of "just the right" amount of water.

The Green Zone map is on page 2.

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Xeriscape Plants

Plants listed do well in Xeriscape beds.

Ocean-Spray (*Holodiscus discolor*)

This native shrub grows from 8' to 15' tall. The leaves are dull green. The creamy white flowers hang in clusters June to August. Flowers dry to a reddish-tan in early fall and persist into winter. Ocean-Spray is shade tolerant and the shallow roots allow for planting in dry sandy areas.

Golden Currant (*Ribes aureum*)

This hardy shrub grows 6' to 8' tall and has a spread of 8' to 12'. It has bright green foliage and golden-yellow flowers which change to berries in the summer. This shrub is shade tolerant, winter hardy and drought tolerant.

Mallow Ninebark (*Physocarpus malvaceus*)

Ninebark grows to a height of 6' to 12'. This shrub is dense and upright with long arching branches. The leaves are similar in shape to the Maple and turn bright yellow in the fall. Blooming May to July, the flowers are small, white clusters at the ends of the branches. The shrub requires full sun, minimal water, and tolerates a wide range of soil types.

Basin Big Sage (*Artemisia tridentata*)

This woody shrub branches freely and grows 2' to 8' tall. The leaves are gray-green with three rounded teeth or lobes on the blunt tip. Flower heads spread out across the tips, blooming in late summer and into the fall. Sage is known for growing under various conditions and will tolerate anything except overwatering.

plant listing continued on page 2

The Xeriscape Bed is #2 on The Green Zone map. The Green Zone is located at the Spokane Conservation District and WSU/Spokane County Extension, 210 & 222 N. Havana, Spokane WA 99202. (509) 535-7274 (SCD) (509) 477-2048 (WSU)

Xeriscape Plants (continued)

Western Sandcherry (*Prunus bessyi*)

This tall shrub/short tree stands 4' to 6' tall. It is a native shrub with light green, elliptic leaves. The flower is a showy white blossom that blooms in May giving way to small sweet fruit in July. This shrub tolerates hot, dry conditions but does prefer well drained soils.

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)

Serviceberry is a multi-branched flowering shrub that grows from 5' to 10' tall. The leaves are dark green. The delicate white flowers are the first to bloom in the Inland Northwest. The Serviceberry will tolerate partial to full sun and requires dry to moderate moisture.

Woods Rose (*Rosa woodsii*)

The Woods Rose, also known as the Wild Rose, grows in a short dense thicket to a height of 3' to 6'. The leaflets grow in clusters of 5 to 9 per stem. The stems have prickly thorns. The pink flowers grow in showy clusters lasting from June to September. Woods Rose prefers full to moderate sun and moderate to dry soils.

Common Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)

Chokecherry is a fruit bearing shrub/small tree that can grow to a height of 12' to 20'. The leaves are shiny green. The blossoms are white and hang in 2-5" clusters. The bloom is early to mid-May. The shrub often forms dense thickets. Chokecherry needs full to partial sun and prefers moderate moisture with sandy, loamy or gravelly soils.

American Mountain Ash (*Sorbus americana*)

This tree/shrub will grow to a height of 15' to 25'. The compound leaflets, 11 to 17 per stem, are a medium green. The white flowers bloom in May and grow in dense flat top clusters followed by red-orange berries that persist through winter. The American Mountain Ash grows well in sunny open areas and tolerates a wide range of soils.

Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*)

The Russian Olive is classified as a shrub/ small tree growing 15' to 20' tall. It has silvery-gray leaves and thorny branches. The shrub does well in sandy floodplains and it tolerates a wide range of soils.

These plants are examples of some that might be used in a xeriscape landscape in the Spokane area. For more information, visit the Resource Center, co-located with the Master Gardener Plant Clinic in the Extension Education Center.

This informational pamphlet is one of a series.

