



**If you follow the 7 steps of Xeriscape™**, you can have a beautiful garden and landscape in spite of the drought. Remember all plants need moisture to get established and most plants are considered established after one growing season, trees and shrubs need two seasons.

### **1. Planning & Design.**

It's always a good idea to start with a plan. Sketch out the yard area to be created or renovated. Include in it the trees & shrubs that you want to keep, driveways, hardscapes such as decks, play areas, building dimensions, etc. Color code or mark on a second see-through page the sunny areas, shade areas, water requirements, and functions such as play, garden, pool, etc. Once these areas are firm in your sketch, draw a more defined plan to scale.

### **2. Improve the Soil.**

Most soils in the west are sandy or heavy clay and need to have organic matter added to improve the soil to give the plants/grass/trees/shrubs a fighting chance. Compost or aged manure adding one or two inches to the existing soil and tilling it in to a depth of 6 inches will give great results. This is time to amend the soil—it will never mean more or be easier. Don't skimp.

### **3. Create practical turf areas.**

Bluegrass has its place in a low-water landscape when it provides a functional benefit. Substitute groundcovers in areas where turf is hard to grow or maintain such as on slopes or in the shade or very narrow strips.

### **4. Water efficiently with appropriate methods.**

Plan the irrigation system at the same time as you plan your design. Zone the turf areas separately and group the plantings by water requirements. Use drip, micro-spray or bubbler emitters for trees, shrubs & perennials. You can also plan to water by hand but avoid oscillating sprinklers, sprinklers that throw water high into the air or produce a fine mist—these lose too much to evaporation. Water only between 6:00 p.m. and 9:00a.m. and never when it is raining or with high winds. Adjust your sprinkler system regularly to account for changes in climate.

### **5. Select plants appropriate for climate and group according to water needs.**

Group plants according to their water requirements. Use the X-rated plant list to help you with selection. Place low water using plants together and in areas that are hardest to get to with irrigation or hand watering. Place high water using plants in a low laying area where natural drainage will help with their maintenance. Reduce the likelihood of over watering by thoroughly thinking through and investigating plant needs before you start.

### **6. Mulch to reduce evaporation.**

Mulches will help you in many regards in the garden: reduce evaporation, cool the root zone, reduce weed growth, slow erosion and give a finished look. Apply directly to the soil surface or over a landscape breathable fabric. Organic materials like wood chips, pole peelings or wood shavings work well but do need to be replaced periodically. Rocks & gravel usually do not require regular replacement.

## **7. Maintain your Xeriscape garden.**

No garden is maintenance free. Xeriscape gardens also need regular or seasonal care: Winter: prune deciduous trees & late blooming deciduous shrubs and water root zones of plants if there is no precipitation. Spring: Aerate lawns and mow to height of 3", check sprinkler operations, prune evergreen shrubs, work compost into the soil and plant trees & shrubs. Summer: plant annual, control pests, weed and trim dead flower heads. Fall: apply lawn fertilizer, compost leaves & green plant matter and water new plants.