

Water Conservation Through Creative Landscaping

Low maintenance landscaping enables you to save water and reduce water bills while maintaining a beautiful landscape. During the summer in Lawrence a large amount of water is used for landscapes. Following these seven basic principles leads to landscape water conservation.

Low Maintenance Landscaping

- 1 Start With A Good Design**

The first step in conserving water is to develop a good design. First, sketch your yard with existing buildings, trees, shrubs, and grass areas. In addition, consider the landscape budget, function and appearance. Recognize limitations such as grade, exposure to sun and wind, size, etc. Consider installing your landscape in phases over a period of several years to reduce initial water use and cost.
- 2 Use Mulch**

A mulch is material used to cover the soil. Mulches can be organic materials such as pine bark, compost and wood chips or inorganic materials, such as lava rock or limestone. A good mulch conserves water by reducing moisture evaporation from the soil. Mulch depth should be about 2-3”.
- 3 Improve Soil**

To increase plant health and conserve water, till or spade organic matter into the soil of bed areas. Adding organic matter increases the soils ability to absorb and store water in a form available to the plant.
- 4 Practical Lawn Areas**

It is wise to reduce the size of maintained lawn areas, since grasses require the most water and maintenance. Some grasses are better than others for certain conditions. Warm season drought resistant species such as Zoysia grass, Buffalo grass and Bermuda grass and cool season Tall fescue are good for hot sunny areas. Good lawn substitutes are wildflowers, ground covers, and native or decorative grasses including Switch grass, Bluestem and Indian grass. Decks, patios and other hard surfaces of stone, brick or wood can be used to reduce lawn areas.
- 5 Choose Low Water Use Plants**

Native Plants are those which are found growing naturally in the Lawrence Area, and are able to thrive in this climate (Zone 5). Low water use plants are found in other parts of the world that have temperature and rainfall similar to Lawrence; these plants adapt well, too. Native and low water use plants require regular deep watering up to two years after being planted. This helps them to become established and develop deep healthy root systems. One inch water per week during the active growing season is required by most plants. A complete list of recommended plant materials is available at the Douglas County Extension Office.
- 6 Water Efficiently**

The greatest waste of water is applying too much too often. Most plants, including grasses, develop deeper root systems and tolerate drought better if watered deeply. Target water needs. To know when to mow the lawn, simply observe the grass. If walking across the grass leaves footprints, or the blades curl, it is time to water. When soil is heavy clay or rocky, watering may have to be monitored more closely to avoid run-off. Water early in the morning or late in the evening to avoid evaporation loss. As the weather changes, (temperature, wind, sunlight, rainfall) so does the watering requirements of plants.
- 7 Good Maintenance**

Good Maintenance is a key component to conserving water.

 - Fertilize as Needed
 - Remove Weeds
 - Aerate lawns for better water penetration
 - Prune or thin woody plants wisely
 - Raise the height of the lawnmower to its highest setting
 - Mow Turf at 3.5” to 4” height to reduce weeds and encourage deep root growth
 - Water according to the needs of specific plants

For more information, call the Lawrence Utilities Dept., 832-7800 or Parks & Recreation at 832-7970.

Water Efficient Plant List

	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	SIZE
ANNUALS	Celosia	Celosia cristata	1-3'
	Cleome	Cleome spinosa	3-4'
	Four-o-Clocks	Mirabilia jalapa	2-3'
	Gomphrena	Gomphrena glabosa	1-2'
	Lantana	Lantana spp	1-2'
	Marigold	Tagetes erecta	8-24"
	Periwinkle	Catharanthus roseus	8-12"
	Portulaca	Portulaca grandiflora	2-4"
	Salvia	Salvia spp	18-24"
	Zinnia	Zinnia elegans	15-30"
	Bluestem	Andropogon gerardii, Schizachyrium scorparium	2-7'
	Indian Grass	Sorghastrum sinensis	5-6'
	PERENNIALS	Aster	Aster spp.
Blanketflower		Gaillardia puchella	8-12"
Bluemist spirea		Caryopteris clandonensis	3-4'
Black-eyed Susan		Rudbeckia fulgida	18-24"
Butterfly Bush		Buddleia davidii	5-7'
Butterfly Weed		Asclepius tuberosa	1-2'
Coreopsis		Coreopsis spp.	6-24"
Evening Promise		Oenothera missouriensis	8-12", shade
Iris		Iris spp.	18-30"
Kansas Gayfeather		Liatris pycnostachya	30-36"
Lambs' Ears		Stachys byzantina	10-30"
Purple Coneflower		Echinacea purpurea	2-3'
Russian Sage		Perovskia atriplicifolia	3-4'
Sedum		Sedum spp	18-24"
Lavender		Lavandula angustifolia	4-6"
Yarrow		Achillea millefolium	18-24"
VINES & GROUND COVERS	Boston Ivy	Parthenocissus tricuspidata	
	Creeping Junipers	Juniperis Horizontalis	
	Daylily	Hemerocallis spp.	
	Hall's Honeysuckle	Lonicera japonica 'Halliana'	
	Periwinkle	Vinca minor	
SHRUBS	Sedum	Sedum spp.	
	Wintercreeper	Euonymus fortunei var. coloratus	
	Forsythia	Forsythia Intermedius	6-10' deciduous
	Beauty Bush	Kolkwitzia amabilis	8-12' deciduous
	Privet	Ligustrum obtusifolium	6-10' deciduous
	Juniper	Juniperus species	3-30' evergreen
	Fragrant Sumac	Rhus Aromatica	4-6' deciduous
	Korean Lilac	Syringa meyeri	4-6' deciduous
	Mentor Barberry	Berberis mentorensis	4-5' deciduous
	Quince	Chaenomeles speciosa	3-4' deciduous
TREES	Coralberry	Symphoricarpos orbiculatis	3-5' deciduous
	Yucca	Yucca filamentosa	2-3' evergreen
	Norway Maple	Acer platanoides	50-60' deciduous
	Bur Oak	Quercus macrocarpa	40-60' deciduous
	Green Ash	Fraxinus pennsylvanica	40-60' deciduous
	Hackberry	Celtis occidentalis	60-70' deciduous
	Honeylocust	Gleditsia triacanthos	40-50' deciduous
	Lacebark Elm	Ulmus parvifolia	35-50' deciduous
	Shingle Oak	Quercus imbricaria	50-60' deciduous
	Amur Maple	Acer ginnala	25-35' deciduous
Crabapple	Malus spp.	10-30' deciduous	
Redbud	Cercis canadensis	20-25' deciduous	

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