



Water Wise Landscapes

A water-wise landscape is one that is functional, attractive, easily maintained in its natural surroundings and, more importantly, helps to conserve water.

There are a few simple principles to keep in mind when we design, install, and manage our landscapes in order to ensure a water-wise landscape.

1. When selecting plants, consider native or drought tolerant plants. (A general rule is that the broader the leaf, the more water the plant will need.) Shop at Warner's for plants that are well-suited to Northern Arizona and your particular microclimate. Keep turf grass (the thirstiest of all!) to a minimum. Plant trees whenever possible. They help to lower air and soil temperatures, reducing plant and soil moisture loss.
2. Group plants thoughtfully. When selecting trees, shrubs, ground covers, perennials and annuals for your garden, look for those that naturally grow together and use about the same amount of water.
3. Use water wisely. Water plants only when needed, not by the clock or calendar. Install a drip system whenever possible. Avoid runoff and overspray. (For more information on watering wisely, visit our ['Learn to Water Well' newsletter](#).)
4. Improve your soil. Cultivate your soil at least once a year, incorporating fresh organic matter such as compost or Warner's Planting Mix. This simple step improves the soil's ability to resist evaporation and retain moisture.
5. Mulch around trees and planting beds. Mulching is one of the easiest and best things that you can do in your landscape, for water retention as well as many other benefits. By mulching around trees and planting beds, moisture is retained in the soil and weeds are discouraged. In addition, mulch tends to regulate the soil temperature making it a more stable environment for plant roots. There are many types of mulches available. Take a cue from nature and choose one of many organic mulches that add great visual texture to your landscape, such as shredded bark or chips, compost, or even low-growing ground cover. One benefit of organic mulches is that they improve the organic matter content of the soil as they decay. (This may be undesirable, however, for plants that require excellent drainage and dislike wetter soil conditions.)

6. Group container plants. Arrange containers so they shade one another. During droughts or periods of drying winds, place them in the deepest shade they can tolerate. Wet the entire rootball; double pot by setting small pots inside larger ones with a layer of sand or gravel between. Top-dress pots with a layer of mulch over the soil.

7. Maintain your landscape plants. One of the most important components of a beautiful and lasting landscape is regular maintenance; including weeding, fertilizing, pruning, etc. Not only will you keep your plants healthy, but maintenance will also help to conserve water. For example, by weeding regularly, your landscape plants will not have to compete with weeds for water. Fertilize most plants at least once per season (see a sales person for specific fertilizing needs of your plants). Follow instructions carefully and apply an adequate amount of nutrients, but do not over apply fertilizers. This could burn your plants, or create excessive growth that will increase your maintenance requirements. Excessive fertilization may also leave plants more susceptible to insects and diseases.