

Water Smart™

PLANTING TIPS

Select plants that are suitable for water smart landscapes. When watered correctly, these plants require less water than their higher-use counterparts. Select trees and shrubs of varying growth habits and textures to add interest and seasonal changes to the landscape.

-  1 A successful water smart landscape begins with a good design. Water efficiency in the landscape can be maximized if it is considered in the initial planning phase. For assistance, consider contacting a local landscape designer or nursery professional.
- 2 Select and install an efficient irrigation system.
- 3 Research plant species to determine appropriate time to plant.
- 4 Consider a soil analysis. Contact the County Cooperative Extension Office for more information. Amend soil, as necessary.
-  5 Dig a drainage test hole (one cubic foot) and fill with water. Allow to drain. Refill with water. Note the drainage characteristics of the soil. If water has not drained within twelve hours, the soil is poorly drained and may not be suitable for plantings without drainage modification.
- 6 Irrigation delivery rates will differ based on soil drainage. Clay soils require less volume and frequency of water than granite-based or sandy soils.
- 7 Make certain that plants with similar water needs are placed on the same irrigation zone.
-  8 Clear all planting areas of weeds. Consider mulching or installing a layer of weed barrier covered by decorative rock or gravel to control weed growth. Avoid weed barrier directly underneath trees and shrubs.
- 9 Research mature plant size. Leave enough area between each plant to allow for future growth.

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-  10 Make sure mature plants will not grow too close to buildings or interfere with power lines.
- 11 A planting hole should be as deep as the rootball and 2 to 3 times as wide. The top of the rootball should be even with the surface when placed in the hole.
-  12 If plant is root bound, roots will be visibly circling the rootball. Lightly loosen outside roots prior to planting.
- 13 Water immediately after planting and closely watch for signs of stress for the first several months. If signs of stress are apparent, seek advice from local landscape or nursery professionals or the County Cooperative Extension Office.
- 14 Immediately remove weeds that grow around new plants. Weeds compete for water and nutrients.
- 15 Fertilize sparingly. Too much fertilizer may harm plants. Many drought tolerant plants require little or no fertilization. Research specific plant needs to determine type of fertilizer needed and frequency of application.
- 16 Prune with care to preserve a plant's natural shape. Learn proper pruning techniques for the plants you have chosen.
- 17 New plants have a smaller root zone and require more frequent watering than established plants.
- 18 Landscapes require regular maintenance. A well maintained landscape and irrigation system will ensure outdoor living areas remain healthy and water smart.
- 19 A plant's leaves provide clues to its health.
 - A dull or bluish leaf means the plant is stressed for water.
 - Wilting is a result of under or over watering, over fertilization, or incorrectly applied herbicide. Dig to find the cause, and aerate around the root, if necessary.
 - Dead leaves can be the product of hot, windy conditions when a plant needed water. Dead spots are a sign of sun burning.
 - Brown edges can be caused by poor drainage, excessive salts in the soil, or compacted soil.
 - Older leaves naturally fall from trees, but it can also point to a lack of sunlight or stress after transplant.
 - Yellow leaves signify a lack of nitrogen.

For more information and helpful community links,

visit the Coalition website at

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