CITY OF RATHDRUM

Xeriscape Guide

WHAT IS XERISCAPE?

Xeriscaping (zeer-i-skaping) is an approach to landscaping design and maintenance that promotes water conservation using native and/or drought tolerant plants.

Xeriscape is not rocks, junipers or black plastic. It includes displays of bright colors, plant diversity and typically includes some lawn area.

Xeriscaping is a word originally coined by a special task force of the Denver Water Department, Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado and Colorado State University to describe landscaping with water conservation as a major objective.

The need for landscaping to conserve water received new impetus following the drought of 1977 throughout the western states and the recognition that nearly 50 percent of the water used by the average household is for turfgrass and landscape plantings.

The basic concepts of xeriscape began as a way of lessening the effects of water shortages while maintaining the aesthetic qualities of the home landscape.

December 2019

THE PRINCIPALS OF XERISCAPING

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. In general south and west exposures result in the greatest water losses, especially near buildings or paved surfaces. Don't be too quick to rip out sod and substitute plastic or rock which can raise temperatures near the house. Terracing slopes reduces water runoff.

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. Try drought resistant grasses or even meadow mixes containing wildflowers. Limit turf to small or heavily used areas, especially near the house.

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. Soil amendment is key to water conservation.

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. Organic mulches keep soil moist and improve it over time.

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. A professional irrigation company should be used to ensure the job is done correctly.

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

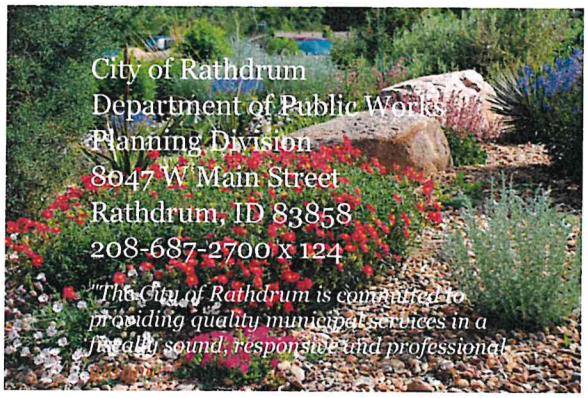
PLANT LIST

This is a list of plants and trees which may be suitable for xeriscape landscape in our area. This list is not intended to be comprehensive, nor warrant or guarantee viability.

Flowering Plants:
Speedwells (Veronica)
Coneflowers (Rudbekia)
Echinacia (Purple Coneflower)
Red Penstemon (Digitalis)
Purple Monarda (Bee-balm)
Asters (Asteraceae)
Tickseed (Coreopsis)
Columbine (Aquilegia)
Pearly Everlasting (Anaphalis Margaritacea)
Heather or Heath (Calluna)
Catnips (Nepeta)

Spires & Ornamental Grasses
Blazing Stars (Liatris)
Celosia (Cockscomb)
False Goat's Beard (Astilbe)
Flame Grass (Miscanthus Purpureus)

Shrubs & Bushes (many flowering)
Ocean-Spray (Holodiscus Discolor)
Mountain-Spray (Holodiscus Dumosus)
Golden Currant (Rives Aureum)
Ninebark (Physocarpus Malvaceus)
Big Sage (Artemesia Tridentata)
Serviceberry (Amelanchier Alnifolia and Utahensis)
Western Sandcherry (Prunus Bessyi)
Woods Rose (Rosa Woodsii)
Redstem Ceanothus (C. Sanguineus)
"Boxwood" (Paxistima)
Lavendar Cotton (Santolina)
Sage– common, Russian, culinary (Salvia)
Baby's Breath (Gypsophila)
Cinquefoils (Potentilla)
Viburnum (Viburnum)
Oregon Grape (Mahonia Aquifolium)
Prostrate Juniper (Juniperus Communis)
Mugo or Mountain Pine (Pinus Mugo)



Vines
Hop Vine (Humulus Lupulus)
Honeysuckle (Lonicera Ciliosa)
Small-flowered Native Clematis (C. Ligustifolia and C. Columbiana)

Trees
Prunus Virginiana (Common Chokecherry)
Sorbus Americana (American Mountain Ash)
Elaegnus Angustifolia (Russian Olive)
Acer Glabrum (Rocky Mountain Maple)
Betula Papyrifera (Paper Birch)
Populus Tremuloides (Quaking Aspen)
Abies Concolor (White Fir)
Abies Lasiocarpa (Subalpine Fir)
Juniperus Scopulorum (Rocky Mountain Juniper)
Pines—Most

Groundcover
Kinnikinnick (Arctastaphylos Uva-ursi)
Prunella (Selfoheal)
Stonecrop (Sedum)
Creeping and Woolly Thyme (Thymus Serphyllum)
Creeping Veronica (Veronica Filiformis)
Tanacetum (Tanacetum)
Creeping Phlox (Phlox Stononifera)
Sweet Woodruff (Rubiaceae)
Snow on the Mountain (Cerastium)

Lawn /Turf:
Kentucky Blue Grass (Poaceae Pratensis)
Tall and Fine Fescue (Festuca)

With Thanks

Credit for the information within this publication goes to: University of Idaho Extension Bulletin 862, "Landscaping with Native Plants" by Stephen L. Love etal.; Spokane Conservation District and WSU/Spokane County Extension publication "The Green Zone" 2012 with funding provided by a Public Participation Grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology; Colorado State University Extension, a division of the Office of Engagement, publication 7.228 "Xeriscaping: Creative Landscaping" by C. Wilson, J.R. Feucht and Susan Carter (3/19); and "Desert Drama Possible in North Idaho With (Pseudo) Xeriscaping", The Bonner County Dailey Bee, October 27, 2019 by Valle Novak.