

# Water-wise gardens grow a sustainable future

Now is the perfect time to design your yard with water in mind. Re-landscaping during wet years helps plants become established. This way, they are better able to survive future dry years. Don't wait, re-landscape!

## Key Tips

- Pace yourself. If re-landscaping on your own, don't try to do it in one or two weekends (unless you have a tiny yard). It will take time!
- If you aren't sure about removing all of your lawn, try a small area at first.
- The best time to plant is October-November or March-April. Summer is a great time to plan your project by visiting nurseries and installing irrigation or hardscape.
- Plan your garden to have various plants in bloom during different times of the year.
- Create seating and living areas in your yard.
- The first season, your plants will need extra water to get established. This is a long-term water-saving project.

## Resources

Come back to these exhibits anytime online. Visit our website for more tips and resources for each of the re-landscaping steps. View photographs and get more information on all of the plants featured here.

[water.ca.gov/turf/statefair](http://water.ca.gov/turf/statefair)

For information on turf rebates, go to:

[saveourwaterrebates.com](http://saveourwaterrebates.com)

Save Our Water  **REBATES**



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**California**  
**Department of Water Resources**

SPECIAL THANKS TO

**California Conservation Corps**  
for help in construction of the Landscape Exhibit

SUPPORT WAS ALSO PROVIDED BY

**California**  
**Department of Food and Agriculture**

Printed by DWR Printing Production Services



**Water-wise**  
**Gardens &**  
**Landscapes**  
**How-to steps &**  
**plant identification guide**

# Steps to Create a Water-wise California Landscape

California's precipitation varies dramatically from year to year, swinging from drought to flood and back again. How do you turn your yard into a water-wise garden perfect for our climate? This brochure is your step-by-step guide to saving water in your landscaping without compromising on beauty.

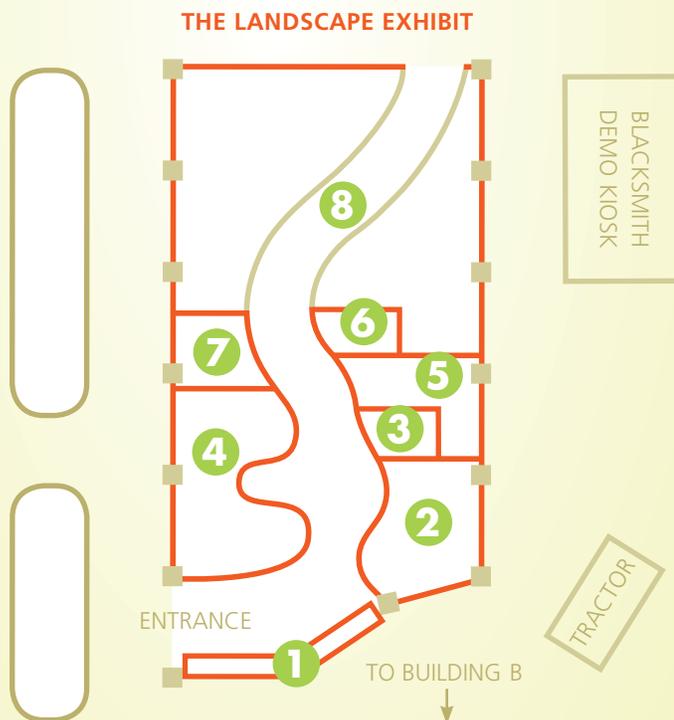
About 60% of California's urban water is used on outdoor landscaping. Your choices could save thousands of gallons of water this year. Inspire your friends and neighbors to choose a water-wise garden, too. The savings would multiply. Rain or shine, Californians conserve.

Visit our website:

[water.ca.gov/turf/statefair](http://water.ca.gov/turf/statefair)

for more details on this exhibit and links to other helpful websites.

WATER-WISE GARDENS



1

## Plan your Project

Before you start, take time to develop an overall concept. Draw a layout of your yard and mark areas of shade and high sun. This will help you plan for the types of plants you want, and where to place them.



2

## Remove Turf

Options include sheet mulching, physical removal (digging or a rented sod cutter), solarization, or chemical. This part of the project can be very labor intensive. Sheet mulching is the recommended approach because it is less work, minimizes waste, and enriches the soil.



3

## Amend Soil

Compost adds nutrients to your soil, jump-starts early growth, and helps your plants stay healthy. If your soil is compacted, try to dig the compost in. If you can't fully work the compost in, leave it on top of the soil.



4

## Irrigation

Either install a new water-efficient system or retrofit your existing one. There are several options for new systems. If retrofitting, some heads can be capped or modified to the dripline. Spray nozzles should be replaced with high efficiency nozzles. Plan your irrigation areas in zones to allow plants with similar water needs to be grouped together.



5

## Permeable Hardscape

Setting pavers or flagstone in sand allows water to seep into the ground, which is a good thing! Edging like stones, brick, or wood helps define different parts of your garden.



6

## Layout

Before digging holes, set your plants out to double-check that they are spaced and grouped properly. Remember to account for how large the plants will become in a year or two. If you are using driplines, lay these out in this step, too.



7

## Mulch

Mulch helps keep soil cool, retains moisture, and stops weeds from growing. It can also be used to add visual interest and color. Use large-textured mulch on slopes or where a leaf blower is used.



8

## Finished Project

Congratulations! You have created an attractive, low-maintenance, and water-wise garden. Did it become an edible garden with fruit and vegetables for the family? Or perhaps you preferred the ease of succulents, the sway of ornamental grasses, or even a rain capture or butterfly garden? We hope we have helped you create the garden of your dreams— rain or shine.

# Water-wise Gardens & Landscapes PLANT GUIDE

Choose from a breathtaking array of water-wise plants for your California landscape. Adapted to our short wet winters and long hot dry summers, water-wise plants thrive and feel right at home in our Mediterranean climate. There are so many, we couldn't show them all! Ask your local nursery about a variety of water-wise plants available to you including many trees and plants that love shade.

Note: Not all plants in the exhibits are shown here.

CA denotes a California native plant

## Groundcovers

Lawn is the most familiar groundcover, but there are many other appealing water-wise choices. Groundcovers usually grow from about one inch high to three feet tall. Some will creep and root as they grow, others spread from a central point. Since lawns don't work well on slopes or in rocky areas, groundcovers can fit the bill. Many attract pollinators, flower throughout the year, and need little maintenance. All will protect the soil from erosion.



**Creeping Myoporum e.g.**  
*Myoporum parvifolium*  
"Putah Creek"



**Peruvian Verbena**  
*Verbena peruviana*



**Silver Carpet**  
*Dymondia margaretae*



**Fruity Germander**  
*Teucrium majoricum*



**Sedum**  
*Sedum (various)*



**Lantana e.g.**  
*Lantana montevidensis*  
"Purple Trailing"



**Gazania**  
*Gazania*



**Ceanothus e.g.**  
"Diamond Heights"

## Perennials & Shrubs

When selecting plants for the garden, we usually start with trees, then shrubs (woody) or herbaceous (soft stem) perennials. Your garden can be a living bouquet of flowers, colorful foliage, and sometimes even fruit or culinary herbs. Create areas with hedges, screening, and focal points that make your garden like no other. The most important considerations when choosing shrubs and perennials are size, sun exposure, and the amount of water it will take for them to grow. You will be pleased with the results when you choose plants that fit your space, are well suited to the amount of sunlight they will get, and are compatible to the water needs of other nearby plants.



**Sundrops**  
*Calyphos Drummondii*



**Blanket flower**  
*Gaillardia x grandiflora*



**South African Daisy**  
*Osteospermum*



**Blue Chalk Sticks**  
*Senecio mandraliscae*



**Sticky Monkey Flower**  
*Mimulus aurantiacus*



**Pincushion Flower e.g.**  
*Scabiosa*  
"Mariposa Violet"



**California Fuchsia**  
*Epilobium Canum*



**Blue Mist Spirea, Bluebeard**  
*Caryopteris clandonensis*



**Salvia e.g.**  
*Salvia microphylla*  
"Hot Lips"



**Yarrow**  
*Achillea (various)*



**Black-Eyed Susan**  
*Rudbeckia hirta*



**Coneflower e.g.**  
*Echinacea purpurea*  
"Berry PowWow"



**Bulbine**  
*Bulbine frutescens*



**Society Garlic e.g.**  
*Tulbaghia violacea*  
"Silver Lace"



**Beard Tongue**  
*Penstemon "Garnet"*



**Coreopsis e.g.**  
*Coreopsis Grandiflora*  
"Sun Kiss"



**Gaura e.g.**  
*Gaura lindheimeri*  
"Whirling Butterflies"



**Rock Purslane**  
*Calandrinia Spectabilis*



**Kangaroo Paw**  
*Anigozanthos flavidus*



**Sea Lavender**  
*Limonium perezii*



**Milkweed**  
*Asclepias tuberosa*



**Black and Blue Sage**  
*Salvia guaranitica*



**Hesperaloe e.g.**  
*Hesperaloe parviflora*  
"Yellow Sun"



**Amistad Sage**  
*Salvia hybrid*



**Red Hot Poker**  
*Kniphofia Uvakia*



**Butterfly Bush e.g.**  
*Buddleia davidii*  
"Harlequin"



**Rose e.g.**  
*Rosa hybrid*  
"Sweet Spot Calypso"



**Sweet Pea Shrub**  
*Polygala dalmaisiana*

## Grasses

Ornamental grasses create interest, texture, and movement in a garden. Grouping ornamental grasses with other plants is a good choice; you can select from grasses that grow in sun or shade, as well as wet spots and dry soils. You'll be surprised at the selection, which vary from small fine textured plants to big bold clumps. Please choose the right ones, like the native California Gray Rush! Avoid invasive species such as pampas grass, Mexican feather grass, and green fountain grass; they spread and cause havoc in our wildlands.



**California Gray Rush**  
*Juncus Patens*



**Cape Rush**  
*Chondropetalum tectorum*



**Berkeley Sedge**  
*Carex tumulicola*

## Trees

Trees are the backbone of any garden, bringing beauty and other benefits to our lives and the environment. If you select your tree carefully and care for a newly planted tree properly, it will benefit you in many ways for years to come. Choose long-lived large trees if you have the space. Medium or small trees are a good choice for small spaces or if there are power lines nearby. Evergreen trees are best for screening and as windbreaks since they keep their leaves year-round. Deciduous trees, which lose their leaves in winter, are best for summer shade and winter sun.



**Smoke Tree e.g.**  
*Cotinus coggygia*  
"Royal Purple"



**Desert Willow**  
*Chilopsis linearis*



**Pomegranate e.g.**  
*Punica granatum*  
"Eversweet"