

Xeriscape™ Basics

The Seven Principles of Xeriscape™

Xeriscape is a common sense way to landscape that conserves water and protects the environment. Xeriscape landscaping is based on seven basic principles that can be successfully applied anywhere.

1. Plan and Design
2. Obtain a Soil Analysis
3. Choose Proper Plants
4. Use Turf Wisely
5. Irrigate Efficiently
6. Use Mulches
7. Perform Proper Maintenance

For more information about Xeriscape™ and water-efficient landscape design, call your local county extension service office.



For local information, contact:

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A large, vertical photograph of a garden. The top half shows yellow flowers, and the bottom half shows red flowers. The text 'How to make Florida-friendly landscaping work for you' is overlaid in white on the top half of the image.

How to make Florida-friendly landscaping work for you

Xeriscape™ — it's not just what you plant, it's how, and where you plant it.

Xeriscape is Florida-friendly landscaping that saves water and protects the environment through the reduced use of pesticides and fertilizer. Xeriscape may also require much less maintenance than traditional landscaping.

This guide will help you select and arrange plants for your own Xeriscape.

Plant selection

Virtually any plant can be used in a Xeriscape landscape, even your favorites, such as roses, gardenias and annuals.

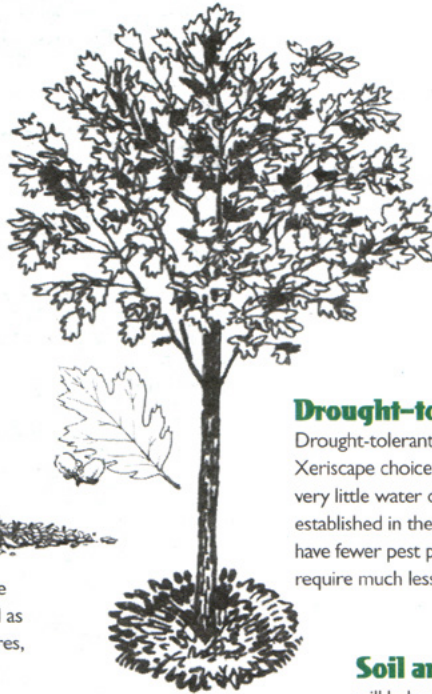
The key is to group these plants separately so they can be watered as needed, without watering the entire yard.



Mulching A 3" layer of mulch will improve the appearance of your landscaped beds, as well as reduce weed growth, moderate soil temperatures, minimize erosion, and help retain soil moisture.



Shrubs and ground covers Shrubs are important in a Xeriscape and are often used in border plantings — at the edge of a landscape feature or to separate one yard from another. Ground covers can add interest and color to a landscape and can be used to fill in open areas in place of grass.



Trees

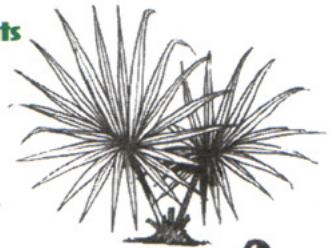
Many trees can be used in a Xeriscape landscape. When choosing a tree, consider its potential height, width and cold hardiness. Trees cool your yard by providing shade and they help reduce evaporation, too.



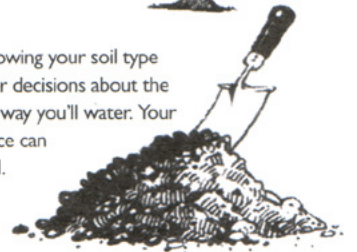
Plant groupings Plants should be grouped according to water and sunlight needs. Plants needing full sun should be grouped separately from those needing shade or moist soil.

Drought-tolerant plants

Drought-tolerant plants are good Xeriscape choices. Most need very little water once they are established in the landscape. Many have fewer pest problems so they require much less time to maintain.



Soil analysis Knowing your soil type will help you make better decisions about the plants you need and the way you'll water. Your county's extension service can determine your soil's pH.



Lawn areas Most grasses require more water, fertilizer and pesticides than other areas of a landscape. In a Xeriscape, grass is used where it is most practical, such as in a play area for children. Ground covers, decks and walkways are often used to reduce grass in Xeriscape landscapes.