

## WATER EFFICIENT GARDENING

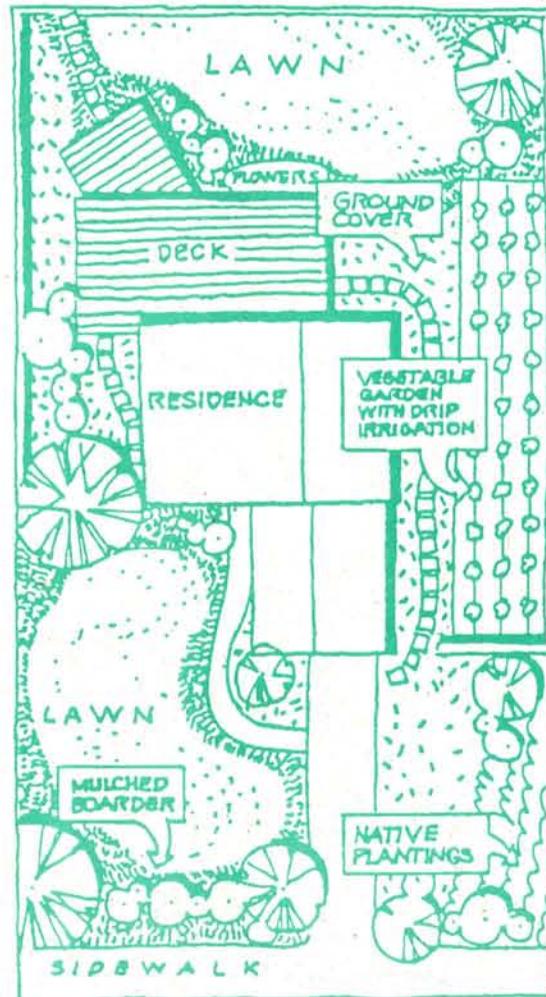
Successful water-saving gardening is simple if you follow the seven fundamentals of water efficient landscaping. Through effective planning and design, soil improvement, appropriate use of turf, efficient irrigation, use of mulches, a well-informed selection of plants that require little water, and a good maintenance program you can achieve a significant savings of water, money, and time.

The actual amount of water you save will vary with the amount and timing of natural precipitation and temperature, but for most people a 50 percent savings is very possible. Just fine-tuning your irrigation practices and equipment can produce savings of 20 to 30 percent. Another bonus is that your garden will be more resistant to environmental stress, therefore less likely to suffer if you are periodically unable to care for it.

The way you design your site can make a big difference in your water use. Landscape experts recommend that plants with like water needs be grouped together so that they are irrigated with the same amount of water. Those that take a great deal of water are separated from those that take less. Typically a yard can be zoned with a small turf area as a water intensive zone and the balance of the site divided into moderate, low, and very low water-use zones. A different watering schedule is developed for each zone. It helps to match your zones with the conditions of your site. If possible, put plants requiring lots of water in the wettest areas and those with limited water needs in the naturally hot and dry areas.

If you are establishing a new yard, you will find it easy to incorporate water efficiency into your planning. Consult a

good water-saving gardening guide, a nursery or landscaping professional, or the county Cooperative Extension office for assistance. For people with established yards, consider gradually changing your landscaping. Look for places that are hard to water or maintain, that never look attractive, or often appear to be suffering from drought. Work on those first. The information in this brochure will give you some ideas to get started.



## LOW WATER USE FLOWERS

(List of plants suitable for water-efficient landscaping continued from inside.)

### Annuals

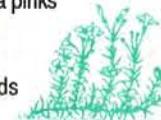
African daisies  
Annual phlox  
California poppy  
Cape weed  
Coneflowers  
Coreopsis  
Dusty miller  
Flax  
Geraniums  
Globe amaranth  
Marguerite  
Moss rose  
Nasturtiums  
Poppies  
Sages  
Sea lavenders  
Spider flower  
Strawflower  
Sweet alyssum  
Sweet William  
Verbenas  
Vinca rosea  
Wallflowers

### Biennials

Chinese forget-me-not  
Coneflowers  
Evening primroses  
Hollyhock  
Sweet William

### Perennials

Baby's breath  
Bearded & Pacific Coast Iris  
Belladonna lily  
Blanket flowers  
Blue & yellow-eyed grasses  
California fuchsias  
Coneflowers  
Coreopsis  
Cosmos  
Daffodils  
Daylilies  
Epimediums  
Evening primroses  
False indigo  
Fountain grass  
Ground pink  
Horehound  
Jerusalem sage  
Matilija poppy  
Pampas grass  
Poppies  
Red hot poker  
Sages  
Sea lavenders  
Stonecrops  
Thrifts, sea pinks  
Thymes  
Verbenas  
Wormwoods  
Yarrows  
Yuccas



Phlox (ground pink)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION



Port Townsend Water Quality  
250 Madison Street  
Port Townsend, WA 98368  
(360) 379-5001

Making the most of a limited resource

a customer's  
guide to  
efficient use  
of water...  
in Landscaping  
and Gardening



Port Townsend Public Works

## FUNDAMENTALS OF WATER-EFFICIENT LANDSCAPING

### Design

Every landscape contains potential problem areas which can be made less troublesome with a more efficient design. Narrow areas, steep slopes, and hot, sunny exposures are some examples. In designing landscapes, plan carefully to prevent the creation of such areas.

Decks and patios increase enjoyment of your yard as well as decrease the amount of water it needs. A bonus is that water tends to run off these structures into planted areas.

Slopes allow water to run off before it can soak in and benefit plants. The steeper the slope, the greater the problem. If your site has steep slopes, consider terracing. Avoid making steep landscaping mounds (berms) of soil because water runs off too quickly, increasing the need for irrigation.

### Soil Improvement

Providing the best soil for your plants is the most important of the seven fundamentals. An ideal soil is a mixture of sand, organic matter, and clay that crumbles easily.

The best way to make your garden take and hold water is old-fashioned tilling and working in generous amounts of organic matter. Good choices include compost, sawdust, and decomposed manure.

Lawns need soil modified from 6 to 8 inches deep; annuals, 8 to 10 inches, and perennials and shrubs, 18 to 24 inches deep.

### Lawn

For a water saving lawn appropriate to our climate, select one of the following species: Turftype Perennial Ryegrass, Hard Fescue, Creeping Red, Chewings, Colonial Bentgrass, and Turftype Tall Fescue.

Lay sod or plant grass seed in the fall when the roots can easily establish themselves without extensive waterings.

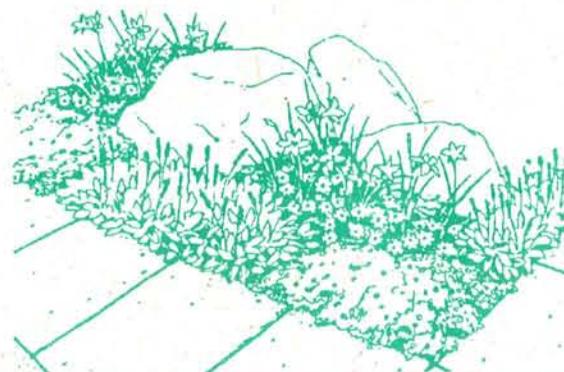
### Irrigation

Make sure your basic garden and irrigation designs are fully integrated. Sketch the plan of your garden, labeling areas that need special attention and think about which method would best serve each space. The irrigation system you choose should provide water at or near the rate at which your soil will absorb it and only as frequently as the plants really need water.

### Mulch

Mulch is a perfect water-control device for your garden. Mulch helps keep the heat of the sun from causing evaporation and controls weeds. Mulches also control erosion around the base of plants and, if organic, can improve the quality of the soil as well. They help prevent soil from compacting, allowing moisture to move easily to the plant roots. It can also make your garden neater and more attractive. Do not use solid sheets of plastic which do not allow air and moisture into the soil.

To obtain the maximum benefit, you should apply thick layers of mulch in more



areas, such as shrub beds and perennial borders; and relate the type of mulch to the requirements of various areas of the landscape.

Perhaps the best "mulch" of all is a very drought-tolerant ground cover, which will perform all the functions of other mulches and lend beauty, color, and interest as well.

### Maintenance

Good maintenance produces a more water efficient lawn and garden.

Fertilizing encourages plant and grass growth and increases watering needs. Apply fertilizers when the soil is moist. Do not fertilize during a drought or when the soil is dry.

Removing weeds is important since weeds compete with other plants and grass for soil nutrients, light, and water. Mulching and hand weeding are the best ways to control weeds.

Severe pruning increases lush growth which demands more water. Heavy pruning in the spring should be avoided. Light pruning during July and August may diminish water loss through leaves. Heavy pruning in July and August may stimulate new growth which demands more water and may also be less hardy.

Thatching the lawn removes the built-up layer of leaves, roots, and stems between the soil and grass blades. If not removed, thatch causes water to run off and not penetrate into the soil. Thatching can be done with a power rake or manual thatch rake.

Aerating the lawn lets water soak into the ground easily and reach the root zone more efficiently. To aerate, use a pronged hand tool or power aerator to remove plugs of soil from the grass. Plugs should be broken up and distributed over the lawn's surface.

## LOW WATER USE TREES & SHRUBS

In selecting plants for a water-saving garden, the challenge is to work in harmony with high and low temperatures, soil types, available sunlight, humidity, and—most important—natural precipitation. Contact your county Cooperative Extension office for a more extensive list of low water use plants.

### Trees

Pines, Oaks, Maple, Cedar,  
& Walnut species  
American smoketree  
Arizona cypress  
Bigtooth maple  
Black locust  
Box elder  
California buckeye  
Cherry laurel  
Chinese chestnut  
Chinese elm  
Common fig  
Curl-leaf mountain mahogany  
English holly  
European mountain ash  
Garry oak  
Ginkgo  
Golden rain-tree  
Green ash cultivars  
Hackberry species  
Hawthorn species  
Japanese Angelica tree  
Japanese pagoda tree  
Japanese zelkova  
Juniper species  
Laurel species  
Madrone  
Mulberry  
Oregon myrtle  
Osage orange  
Sassafras  
Silktree  
Snow gum  
Tanoak  
Thornless honey locust  
Tree-of-Heaven  
Western dogwood  
Western redbud

### Shrubs, Vines & Ground Covers

Alder buckthorn  
Barberry species  
Beauty bush  
Broom species  
California coffeeberry  
Camellia  
Ceanothus species  
Chokeberry, Red  
Common butterfly bush  
Cotoneaster species  
Currant species  
Euonymus species  
European smoketree  
Evergreen clematis  
Firethorn species  
Flowering quince species  
Forsythia  
Fraser photinia  
Germanders  
Honeysuckle species  
Huckleberry species  
Juniper species  
Kinnikinnik  
Lavender species  
Lilacs  
Mahonia species  
Manzanita species  
Ninebark species  
Red osier dogwood  
Salal  
Snowberry species  
Spiraea species  
Sumac  
Viburnums  
Western mock orange  
Wisterias

(Continued on back panel)