

Water Ways



Thinking spring? You're not alone

Visits to the Xeriscape garden pages of Chelan County PUD's Web site have been increasing lately – a sure sign that customers are thinking about spring. And they're not too early. The first step to a beautiful Xeriscape garden is planning.

To help you get started, we're listing the seven principles of Xeriscape. These are key to a successful drought-tolerant garden. The first year requires about the same amount of work that you'd put into any new garden plot. But after this initial effort, little maintenance is required. Saving water, saving money, saving time, and a gorgeous garden – what could be better?



The seven principles of Xeriscape

1. Planning and design

Make a scale drawing of your lot. Identify sunny, shady, and sloped areas. Determine how much room you need for family activities. Design zones to include plants with similar watering needs.

2. Soil improvement

The right soil will do more than anything else to help a plant consume all the moisture available to it. Soil improvement may mean changing the physical structure with decomposed organic matter. It is easier to select plants that can grow in your existing soil rather than try to change the acidity or alkalinity. If the situation seems hopeless, consider raised beds with imported topsoil.

3. Turf

Lawns are the highest users of water and require the greatest maintenance. Fescue and buffalograss are two of the most popular Xeriscape grasses. They are relatively drought-resistant and tolerant of varying soil conditions. They will thrive on low maintenance. A new variety of lawn, Ecoturf, is becoming popular. It combines grass and low growing perennials. Consider decks and patios wherever possible.

4. Plant selection

Research the library, nurseries, and Internet for plants to fit each area of your landscaping. Base your decisions on climate, drought tolerance, your budget, and aesthetics. The hardiest plants will be

native. Intersperse herbs, vegetables and berries in the appropriate landscaping zones.

5. Efficient Irrigation

Select a system that will water each zone most efficiently. Low-volume, low-angle sprinklers work best on grass. Drip, spray or bubbler emitters are most efficient on flowers, shrubs and groundcover. Timers are used to provide the right amount of water to each zone. Dragging the hose around is an option that still requires the right sprinkler and watering time.

6. Mulch

Mulches in the form of bark, gravel or crushed rock should be 2 to 4 inches deep. They conserve moisture, control weeds and add visual interest. Apply the mulch directly over landscape fabric.

7. Maintenance

Maintenance includes weeding, feeding, pruning, pest control, and watering. How much time you spend on these activities is directly related to your initial planning and design.

Xeriscape is a registered trademark of Denver Water, Denver, Colo.

Winter 2008

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How to reach us

Conservation and Customer Services:..... 661-8008

Water Department: 661-4254

Web site: www.chelanpud.org/water-conservation

How about some high-tech help?

Chelan County PUD is a partner in the national Water Use It Wisely campaign. This month, the Water Use It Wisely Web site is featuring some high-tech options to help customers save water. Here's a sample of some new technological tools:

- A soil moisture sensor designed to override irrigation controllers when there's no need to irrigate.
- A device that uses national weather data and combines it with site and sprinkler system information to calculate the exact amount of water needed to irrigate.
- A unit that attaches to your pool pump refreshes pool water every day by cycling pool water into your landscape.
- A water broom that uses a little more than 3 gallons per minute (gpm) as opposed to a hose nozzle that can use 8 to 18 gpm.
- A new, never-needs-replacing washer offered as a substitute for the traditional rubber washers used to seal compression faucets.



Read more about these products at www.wateruseitwisely.com/newTech/index.shtml.

Links to Water Use It Wisely and other helpful information are available on the Water Conservation section of the PUD's Web site: www.chelanpud.org.

Don't miss the Master Gardeners' Plant Sale

Mark your calendar for the annual Master Gardeners' Plant Sale April 26 at the Gesa Credit Union parking

lot in Wenatchee. Xeriscape plants will be featured. Watch for more details in the April issue of this newsletter.

Monitor water project begins

Buno Construction of Snohomish is starting work to extend water from the existing PUD system in lower Sunnyslope to Monitor. The project includes about eight miles of 8- and 12-inch water main, plus another 400 feet of water line suspended beneath the Monitor Bridge. The system will include 43 fire hydrants and 263 connections.

The contractor will start on the east side of the project and gradually move west toward Monitor. Priorities for winter construction include the Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad crossing and numerous ditch crossings that must be finished before irrigation systems fill with water this spring. Construction is expected to take 10 months.

Customers with questions about construction should contact PUD Project Engineer John Goodwill at 661-4022.

Other projects on the drawing board in 2008 include design of:

- a 2-million-gallon, reinforced concrete reservoir and transmission main to replace the three undersized and aging tanks near North Road off Western Avenue.
- pump station upgrades and a new reservoir in the Squilchuck area.
- various water main replacements.

These projects are scheduled for construction in 2009.