

Waterwise Landscaping

Creating a waterwise landscape can provide dramatic water savings for your household.

But you can practice waterwise landscaping even if you don't change any of the plants in your landscape.

By developing good water-use habits, you can ensure that each drop counts—and this means you'll use less water to maintain a healthy, beautiful landscape.



Seven Principles of Waterwise Landscape Design

1. Plan. Group plants with similar needs together. Use drainage patterns and sun exposure in your landscape to your advantage.

2. Work toward healthy soil. Soils with a proper balance of organic and mineral matter require less water and fertilizer. Find out what kinds of soils you have. Add compost if needed and loosen compacted soil.

3. Use turf effectively. Use turf only in high-use areas. Consider drought-tolerant varieties.

4. Irrigate efficiently. Base watering schedule on soil moisture and plant requirements. Base watering system on water-use zones, and keep it in working order.

5. Use water-thrifty plants. Choose plants adapted to the conditions in your landscape; they will need little extra water and care once established.

6. Mulch. Apply 3–4 inches of organic or rock mulch to suppress weeds and minimize evaporation. Replenish annually.

7. Maintain. Weeding, mulching, pruning, and other maintenance all maximize the health of any landscape.

Why Save Water?

Pocatello gets all its drinking water by pumping groundwater from the Lower Portneuf Valley Aquifer.

Rain and snowmelt take a long time to sink deep enough to recharge the aquifer, so the amount of water available to pump out is limited. The Lower Portneuf Valley Aquifer can supply about 7.6 billion gallons of water annually. Pocatello now uses almost 80% of that (5.3 billion gallons in 2007).

In summer, the Pocatello Water Department pumps four times more water than in winter—**over 30 million gallons per day**. Most of this extra water goes to water our landscapes.

We can't increase how much water the aquifer can hold, but we can make the most of the water we do have with good water-use habits.

Many of Pocatello's landscape plants are *overwatered* and can live comfortably with less water.

By following the tips in this brochure, you can significantly improve the effectiveness of your watering—which will result in a healthier landscape grown with less water.

Know how much water you are putting on your landscape

- Put empty tuna cans among your sprinklers to measure how much water is applied in a typical run-time. Using this measurement and the Irrigation Schedule in this brochure, calculate how long the system has to run to apply the water required by each water zone.
- Adjust watering time so the amount of water applied is appropriate for your turf and plants.
- Water new trees and shrubs with soaker hoses placed at the outside edge of the tree crown. Soil should be moist 8-10" deep. New trees and shrubs need 3-5 gallons of water each week.

Water effectively

- Push a long screwdriver into the ground. If it goes in easily, you don't need to water.
- Water less in cool months.
- Water early in the morning or at night.
- Avoid watering on windy or rainy days.
- Water deeply and less often.
- Aerate your lawn.
- Maintain sprinkler systems. Adjust spray heads so they don't spray onto sidewalks or driveway.
- Cut grass no shorter than 3 inches. Shorter grass is more stressed and requires more water.
- Use a mulching mower to keep nutrients in the yard and build organic matter in the soil.

Plants & Irrigation Schedules for Different Water-use Zones

Different plants have different water, sun, and soil requirements. By placing plants with similar requirements together, you can minimize the work you have to do to keep them all healthy. Listed below are examples of plants for three different water zones: high, medium, and low.

For more information...

HIGH

Grasses	Shrubs
Bluegrass	Arborvitae
Perennial Rye	Cranberry Viburnum
	Euonymus
Perennials	Hydrangea
Bleeding Heart	Pussy Willow
Delphinium	Spiraea
Fern	Tea Rose
Hosta	Weigela
Lady's Mantle	
Peony	
	Trees
Alders	Birches
European Beech	Mountain-Ash
Poplars	Quaking Aspen
Willows	

High Water Zone Irrigation Schedule

Plants in this zone need about 23 inches more water than rainfall provides in this 24–26-week irrigation season.

- mid April to mid May, ½" per week.*
- mid May to mid June, ¾" per week
- mid June to mid Sept., 1– 1¼" per week
- mid Sept. to mid Oct., ¾" per week

*April irrigation only needed in unusually dry years .

MEDIUM

Grasses	Shrubs
Turf Fescues	Boxwood
Tall Fescue	Butterfly Bush
Perennials	Floribunda Rose
Aster	Flowering Quince
Black-eyed Susan	Forsythia
Campanula	Lilacs
Coralbell	Littleleaf Mockorange
Daylilies	Mohican Viburnum
Dianthus	Oregon Grape
Foxglove	Potentilla
Geranium	Red-osier Dogwood
Hollyhock	Rugosa Rose
Purple Coneflower	Snowberry
Vinca	
Shasta Daisy	
Scabiosa	
Sweet Woodruff	
	Trees
Colorado Spruce	Eastern Redbud
English Oak	Horsechestnut
Lindens	London Planetree
Norway Maple	Rocky Mt. Maple
Sargent Cherry	

Medium Water Zone Irrigation Schedule

Plants in this zone need about 15–16 inches more water than rainfall provides in this 21-week irrigation season.

- early May to early Oct., ¾" per week

LOW

Grasses	Perennials
Buffalograss	Bearded Iris
Blue Grama	Candytuft
'Covar' Sheep Fescue	Prairie Coneflower
'Sodar' Wheatgrass	Coreopsis
Shrubs	Evening Primrose
Caryopteris	Flax
Cotoneasters	Gaillardia
Golden Currant	Lavender
Junipers	Lambs Ears
Mt. Mahogany	Penstemon, hardy species
Nanking Cherry	Russian Sage
Ninebark	Salvia, hardy species
Serviceberry	Sedums
Siberian Peashrub	Spring-flowering bulbs
Sumacs	Veronica
Yucca	Yarrow
	Trees
Bigtooth Maple	Bristlecone Pine
Bur Oak	Gambel Oak
Goldenraintree	Hackberry
Hawthorns	Pinyon Pines
Ponderosa Pine	Tatarian Maple
Upright Junipers	

Low Water Zone Irrigation Schedule

Plants in this zone need about 7–8 inches more water than rainfall provides in this 15-week irrigation season.

- June 1 to Sept. 30 , ½" per week

Gardens & More

The **Waterwise Garden** at City Hall features three different water zones with plants adapted to each. Pick up the City's list of water-thrifty groundcovers. **Marshall Public Library Park** features a xeriscape garden. Pick up the library's free brochure, *Drought Tolerant Grasses for Your Landscape*. The **Water Department** has a xeriscape demonstration garden.

Books

Creating the Prairie Xeriscape, Williams
Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs, Dirr
Dry-land Gardening, Bennett
Grow Native, Huddleston & Hussey
Low Water Flower Gardener, Johnson
Native Plants for High Elevation and Western Gardens, Busco & Morin
Passionate Gardening, Springer & Proctor
Undaunted Garden, Springer
Waterwise Landscaping with Trees, Shrubs & Vines, Knopf
Xeriscape Flower Gardener, Knopf
Xeriscape Handbook, Weinstein
Xeriscape Plant Guide, Denver Water & American Water Works Assn.
Xeriscaping, Rumary

Websites

plants.usda.gov
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