



Water-Wise Landscaping for Monterey County

Gardening is a great hobby and past-time for all ages, especially during a pandemic. Gardening can reduce stress, create a calm and peaceful environment, and can even boost your immune system! Spending time outdoors helps with vitamin D levels, and gardening is a moderate-intensity exercise.

To save water and create a beautiful healthy garden, follow the tips below and check out Monterey County Water-Wise Landscaping Website for some inspiration!



[Monterey Water-Wise Landscaping Website](#)



Designer: Stephanie Morris
Photographer: GardenSoft



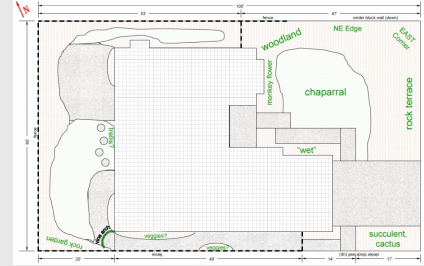
Photographer: GardenSoft

Water-Wise Landscaping Principles:

1. Planning and Design

Draw a layout of your yard showing existing structures, trees, shrubs, grass, and other plants. Determine your landscape

budget, preferred style, function of the area(s), drainage needs, maintenance, and water requirements. Next, sketch your desired landscape plan. Be sure to group plants with similar water needs together.



2. Soil Evaluation and Improvement

The very best thing you can do for your plants and to improve the water storage capacity of the soil is to build deep, high quality soil. A minimum depth of 6 inches of good soil is desirable, but 12-18 inches is preferable. Native and local adapted plants do extremely well with native soils, but improved soils benefit most plant species. Top-dress your turf with shallow layers of quality soil amendments to build a deeper, richer soil profile.



3. Practical Turf Areas

Turfgrasses generally require more frequent watering than native or adapted plants, so use grass in functional areas that can be efficiently watered and maintained. For example, instead of grass, put ground cover in areas that are narrow, small, sloping, odd-shaped, or close to pavement. Many ground cover plants use much less water than turfgrass, are more attractive, and require substantially less maintenance.



4. Appropriate Plant Selection

Choose trees, shrubs, and ground covers that are either native or adapted our local climate and soils. Consult with professional horticulturists in your area or the University of California Cooperative Extension Service for plants best suited to our area.



5. Efficient Irrigation

Water early in the morning to minimize water loss due to evaporation. The sun is less intense and wind is likely to be light or absent. Water only when plants need it. Too much watering not only wastes water, but also can push nutrients away from the plant roots. This practice leads to more mowing, weeding, and pruning. Excess water also causes development of shallow root systems and encourages more disease and insect problems. Plants in hot summer months need water only when they show signs of stress in the



morning. Plants show stress in the afternoon due to the heat of the day and not necessarily the need for water.

6. Use of Mulches

Use mulches wherever possible. Mulches reduce evaporation of water from the soil and limit weed growth. Mulches also help reduce erosion, help moderate soil temperatures, aid in good root development, eliminate weed growth, and add beauty. At least 3-4 inches of mulch should be maintained at all times under and around plants and trees. Replenish often since organic matter decomposes over time. Keep mulch from making direct contact with the trunks of trees or woody ornamentals. Extend mulch out to the drip line where possible.



7. Appropriate Maintenance

Remove weeds from lawns and gardens frequently. Weeds rob plants of valuable water. Check irrigation systems for leaks. Control insect and disease problems when they arise and feed and fertilize your plants only as needed. Too much fertilizer causes plants to require additional mowing and irrigation. For best results, use 3-4 month slow release fertilizer. Mow grass frequently and keep the grass blade heights high.



For more tips to improve your landscape, click the button below!

[Visit the MCWD landscaping website](#)

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