

Low Water Landscaping (Xeriscaping)

Soil Improvement

- Soil testing
- Add organic matter

Benefits of compost

- Increases soil organic matter
- Encourages healthy root growth and structure
- Supports earthworms & other beneficial organisms
- Improves and stabilizes soil pH
- Supplies macro and micronutrients
- Increases water infiltration in heavy soils
- Improves soil water holding capacity in light soils
- Can help suppress some soil-borne plant diseases
- Can bind or degrade certain pollutants

Practical Turf Areas

- Lawns are useful- play, pets, aesthetics
- Plan for what you only really need
- Choose the best turf option
- If not needed- consider alternative ground covers

Efficient Irrigation

- If possible, use a water efficient automatic irrigation system
- Group plants in water need zones
- Water only when needed
- Water late evening or early morning

Use of Mulches

- Protects plants from freezes and drought
- Helps suppress weeds
- Helps reduce surface runoff and erosion
- Holds in soil moisture
- Modifies soil temperatures
- Types of mulches (organic vs. inorganic)

Appropriate Maintenance

- Low water \neq low maintenance
- Well maintained landscape better withstands drought, freeze, and pests
- Fertilize wisely
- Use least toxic pest control methods whenever possible
- Mow when grass 1/3 higher than desired height and leave clippings

Planning and Design

- Develop a base plan
- Conduct a site analysis
- Determine wishes & needs
- Determine design style

- **Locate & design activity areas**
- **Create a planting plan**

Design Steps

Develop a base plan

- **Lot dimensions**
- **Existing items and dimensions**
- **Existing services**
- **Key exterior items**

Conduct a site analysis

- **Soil types & drainage patterns**
- **Sun & wind exposures**
- **Assets**
- **Liabilities**

Determine needs & wishes

- **Climate control, Erosion control, Privacy, Framing views, Fire break, Pets, Play area, Storage area, Pond/water feature, Food garden, Wildlife habitat, Rain garden, Entertainment area, Compost pile, ???**

Determine design style

- **Naturalistic, Cottage garden, Formal, Contemporary, Eclectic, Massing**

Locate activity areas

- **Include existing areas**
- **Pencil in proposed areas**
- **Explore pathways & transitions**

Design activity areas

- **Make choices**
- **Establish dimensions**

Draft a planting plan

- **Choose locations**
- **Right plant, right place**
- **Design based on mature size**

Create a final plan

- **Create specs for plants, hardscape items, irrigation & site prep**

Appropriate Plant Selection

- **Right plant, right place**
- **Native versus non-native**
- **Low water versus no water**
- **Sources of information:**
 - **WSU Extension- Drought Tolerant Landscaping for Washington State; WSU Extension- Hardy Plants for Waterwise Landscapes; OSU Extension- Xeriscaping in the High Desert**