



**Xer-i-scape™:**  
a landscaping method  
that employs a variety  
of lawn and garden  
techniques to conserve  
resources.

# Xeriscaping

*This water-wise gardening technique is quickly catching on as an effective method to conserve water, time, and money. Plants grown in their natural environments, as Xeriscaping recommends, are proven to be more pest resistant, drought tolerant, and healthier overall, requiring less maintenance and expense.*

**Here are steps to help you Xeriscape™ your garden:**

## 1 Proper Planting and Design

Organize plants into groups with similar needs. Consider needs such as water, soil type, and sunlight, and figure out how your garden caters to these needs. *e.g. Plants that require more water and less sunlight should be placed along north and east facing slopes of walls. These areas receive less direct sunlight throughout the day, minimizing moisture lost through evaporation.*

## 2 Soil Improvements

Enrich soil by adding organic matter, such as compost or manure. This will improve soil structure and texture, as well as nutrient and water holding capacity.

## 3 Appropriate Plant Selection

Fill your garden with native Okanagan or drought tolerant plants such as Lavender, Sage, and Dwarf Iris. These, and other drought tolerant selections, can be found at most garden centres.

## 4 Practical Turf Areas

Limit typical grass turf to recreational areas for children and pets. For other areas of your yard, consider planting drought-tolerant native grasses or ground cover instead. Okanagan native grasses include the Sheep Fescue, Perennial Ryegrass, and Bluebunch Wheatgrass.

## 5 Efficient Irrigation

An irrigation system saves you time and can reduce water waste by 50%. Ensure the irrigation system is designed according to the specific water needs of your various plants and is programmed to seasonal changes in temperature and precipitation.

## 6 Mulching

Mulches aid in water retention, minimize water lost from evaporation, reduce weed growth, prevent erosion, moderate soil temperature and add beneficial microorganisms. Compost, grass clippings, leaf debris, bark mulch, and wood chips are all good organic mulches.

## 7 Appropriate Maintenance

A Xeriscape™ landscape is low-maintenance requiring less water, less fertilizer, less routine pruning and fewer pesticides. Excess watering, fertilizing, and pruning can actually do a lot of damage. Over-watering can lead to root rot, weakening plants and making them more susceptible to disease.

*Tip: A great way to maintain a water-wise lawn is by Grasscycling (leaving mowed grass on the lawn and allowing it to work its way back into the soil). Grasscycling reduces water lost through evaporation, helps shade roots from the sun, and adds nutrients so less fertilizers are required.*

*For more information, see the **Xeriscaping** brochure available inside the Okanagan Science Centre.*