

WSU Extension Low-Water-Use Landscape Demonstration

In front of the Benton County WSU Extension Office at the Benton County Annex is a Low-Water-Use Demonstration Landscape bed. It was converted from a bed of overgrown pines and junipers to one with attractive, colorful drought tolerant plants. Examples of the old bed can be seen in front of other offices at this same annex building. While they also function as low-maintenance, low-water-use landscapes... they offer little variety, color, or beauty.



Steps to Creating A Low-Water-Use Landscape



1. If you're creating a brand new landscape bed, proceed to step two. If converting an established bed, your first step is to remove the existing plants, landscape fabric, and mulches. If mulched with bark, rake the mulch off and put it aside for later use. Get rid of any rock mulches.

2. Prepare the soil by tilling. Spread a 4-inch layer of organic matter across the bed and till it thoroughly into the soil. The organic matter tilled in can be clean alfalfa, well rotted compost, or peat moss.

3. Remove any plant debris and large rocks left in the bed. Grade the bed so that the soil is several inches below the bed's outer edge. This helps contain the bark mulch without special edging.

4. Make a plan on paper. Include your basic irrigation plan, where focal points will go, and where individual plant will be placed.

Consider what items you might want to add to provide focal points or special interest to the bed, such as rocks, statuary, or a fountain. Placement of large rocks will be safer and look more natural if the rocks are partially buried or mounded

with soil on at least one side.

Restrain your use of focal points... only one or two is best. Too many items will create a busy look and detract from the plants and overall appearance of the bed.

4. Select "drought tolerant" plants, those with similar low water requirements. Keep in mind flower color, time of bloom, and the plant's mature height and spread when selecting your plants and creating your bed's design. Plant the perennials, shrubs, and trees, making sure the roots are loosened and the plant is situated at the same depth it was growing at the nursery. Fall or early spring are the best times for planting.

5. Install drip irrigation. Monitor soil moisture and adjust emitter sizes and timing of applications as needed for soil and weather conditions. You will need to provide adequate water especially during the first six months to a year as the plants become established.

6. Apply two to four inches of bark mulch. Reapply the mulch every year as needed to maintain the depth.

Suggested References

- Xeriscape Plant Guide, Fulcrum Publishing, 1996. Edited by Denver Water.
- Sunset Waterwise Gardening, Lane Publishing Co., 1989.
- Drip Irrigation for Every Landscape and All Climates, Robert Kourik, Metamorphic Press, 1992
- Landscaping with Native Plants for the Inland Northwest, Tonie Fitzgerald, Washington State University, MISC 0267, 2003.
- Washington State University Extension Spokane County Sustainable Landscape Fact Sheets: www.spokane-county.wsu.edu/spokane/eastside/Sustainable%20Landscaping/Sustainable%20Landscaping.htm
- Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Fact Sheets on Xeriscaping: www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/garden/

Plants in the WSU Low-Water-Use Landscape Demonstration

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| 1 - Juniper - <i>Juniperus scopulorum</i> 'Skyrocket' | 18 - Northern Sea Oats - <i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i> |
| 2 - Ice Plant - <i>Delosperma cooperi</i> 'Cooper's' | 19 - Creeping Thyme - <i>Thymus serpyllum</i> 'Reiter' |
| 3 - Blanket Flower - <i>Gaillardia aristata</i> 'Goblin' | 20 - Salvia - <i>Salvia superba</i> 'May Night' |
| 4 - Coreopsis (Threadleaf) - <i>Coreopsis verticillata</i> 'Moonbeam' | 21 - Coneflower - <i>Echinacea purpurea</i> 'Magnus' |
| 5 - Fountain Grass - <i>Pennisetum alopurecoides</i> 'Moudry' | 22 - Evening Primrose - <i>Oenothera speciosa</i> |
| 6 - Aster - <i>Aster novae-angliae</i> 'Purple Dome' | 23 - Ribbon Grass - <i>Phalaris arundinacea</i> 'Feesey's Form' |
| 7 - Cotoneaster - <i>Cotoneaster dammeri</i> 'Coral Beauty' | 24 - Coneflower - <i>Echinacea purpurea</i> 'Sparkler' |
| 8 - Coreopsis (Threadleaf) - <i>Coreopsis verticillata</i> 'Zagreb' | 25 - Coneflower - unknown |
| 9 - Mexican Feather Grass - <i>Stipa tenuissima</i> | 26 - Russian Sage - <i>Perovskia</i> |
| 10 - Beardtongue - <i>Penstemon</i> 'Sweet Grapes' | 27 - Variegated Iris - <i>Iris pallida</i> 'Variegata' |
| 11 - Mullein - <i>Verbascum</i> 'Super Plum' | 28 - Creeping Thyme - <i>Thymus serpyllum</i> 'Pink Chintz' |
| 12 - Shasta Daisy - <i>Leucanthemum x superbum</i> 'Snow Cap' | 29 - Creeping Phlox - <i>Phlox douglasii</i> 'Cracker Jack' |
| 13 - Blue Flax - <i>Linum perenne</i> | 30 - Juniper - <i>Juniperus horizontalis</i> 'Blue Carpet' |
| 14 - Blue Fescue - <i>Festuca ovina</i> 'Glaucua' | 31 - Coneflower - <i>Echinacea purpurea</i> 'Fragrant Angel' |
| 15 - Sea Thrift - <i>Armeria maritima</i> 'Dusseldorf Pride' | 32 - Creeping Phlox - <i>Phlox subulata</i> 'Emerald Blue' |
| 16 - Lavender - <i>Lavandula angustifolia</i> 'Abrialii' | 33 - Yucca - <i>Yucca filamentosa</i> 'Adams Needle' |
| 17 - Pearly Everlasting - <i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i> | 34 - Sun Rose - <i>Helianthemum</i> 'Peach' |

WSU Low-Water-Use Landscape Demonstration Design

PROJECT DONORS & PARTNERS

Kennewick Irrigation District
Benton Conservation Association
Bedrock Specialty Stone Products

Beaver Bark & Rock
Irrigation Specialists
WSU Master Gardeners

The Benton-Franklin WSU Master Gardeners are involved in various parts of the project
from planning and planting... to weeding and upkeep included:

Jean Bookwalter
Donna Buechler

Lisa Cash
Dorothy Evans

David Evans
Ellen Meade

Gordon Meade
Janice Taylor

