

WATERSMART LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES



ENERGY • WATER • COMMUNITY SERVICES

Thin soils, hot weather and ongoing periodic droughts punctuated by torrential downpours make gardening in Central and South Texas a challenge. Incorporate LCRA's WaterSmart landscape guidelines to plan and create a well-designed, water-efficient landscape.

DESIGN FOR SUCCESS

- Plant turf on no more than 50%, or up to 5,000 square feet, of the landscape.
- Plant drought-tolerant or native turf separate from areas planted with shrubs, trees or perennials.

PREPARE YOUR SOIL

- Use at least 6 inches of topsoil blended with organic material in planted areas.
- Use native soil from the site, or a fertile, easily crumbled soil/compost blend.
- Incorporate topsoil into 2 to 3 inches of the existing surface to enable water to drain adequately.

USE MULCH

- Finish areas planted with trees, perennials and shrubs with a 2- to 4-inch deep layer of high quality 50/50 blend of organic mulch and compost.
- Use wood chip mulch free of man-made debris, shredded into coarse pieces from 1 to 3 inches.
- Use rock mulch ONLY in small areas with succulents or areas without irrigation requirements such as pathways. Rock mulch can increase heat effect and require more water on planted beds.



MAINTAIN YOUR LANDSCAPE

- Replenish mulch a minimum of every two years in the fall and spring.
- Aerate turf grass within the first year of construction and twice a year afterward.
- Topdress turf grass with quality compost twice a year.
- Mow turf no shorter than 3-4 inches.
- Set your automatic irrigation system back to a normal schedule after turf is established.
- Watering recommendations can be found at www.WaterMyYard.org.
- Please refer to your local water provider for watering requirements.



IRRIGATE EFFICIENTLY

Automated irrigation systems aren't necessary for a thriving landscape. If you choose to install an automated system, a licensed irrigator must install it according to state regulations.

Irrigation system guidelines

- Limit automatic irrigation for each home or business to 2 times the foundation footprint – or a 10,000-square-foot maximum.
- Use point source drip emitters for trees and shrubs, and drip tubes at a depth of 2 inches below surface for ground cover plants.
- Do not irrigate turf with point source drip irrigation. Instead use multistream rotators when possible.
- Use irrigation zones and plant drought-tolerant and/or native varieties with similar watering needs together.
- Prevent overspray onto hardscapes such as driveways, sidewalks and streets.
- Include in-line check valves and sprinkler heads with check valves in irrigation zones at the bottom of sloped terrain along curbs, sidewalks and streets.

Recommended irrigation system features

- A rain sensor, soil moisture sensor or weather sensor to stop the irrigation cycle during and after a rainfall event.
- In-line pressure regulators, flow control valves or sprinkler devices equipped with pressure regulation stems or nozzles to maintain efficient water flow.
- A WaterSense-labeled smart controller featuring multiple start times, rain sensor capability, a water budget feature and a non-volatile memory in case of a power outage.

Do not use irrigation on medians, parking islands and other areas less than 10 feet wide. Use native or drought-tolerant plants, or consider using artificial turf in these smaller areas.





CHOOSE PLANTS WISELY

Use native and drought-tolerant plants and turf that require little watering. Avoid invasive and annual plants.

PLANT PREPPING, PLACEMENT AND SPACING

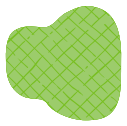
Proper plant placement and spacing is critical to plant health and long-term landscape quality.

- Consider the mature height and width of plants before planting them.
- Dig a hole for a plant or tree two to three times wider than the plant's root ball or plant's container.
- Blend existing soil with compost before sodding or seeding with turf grass.

Conservation landscaping design example



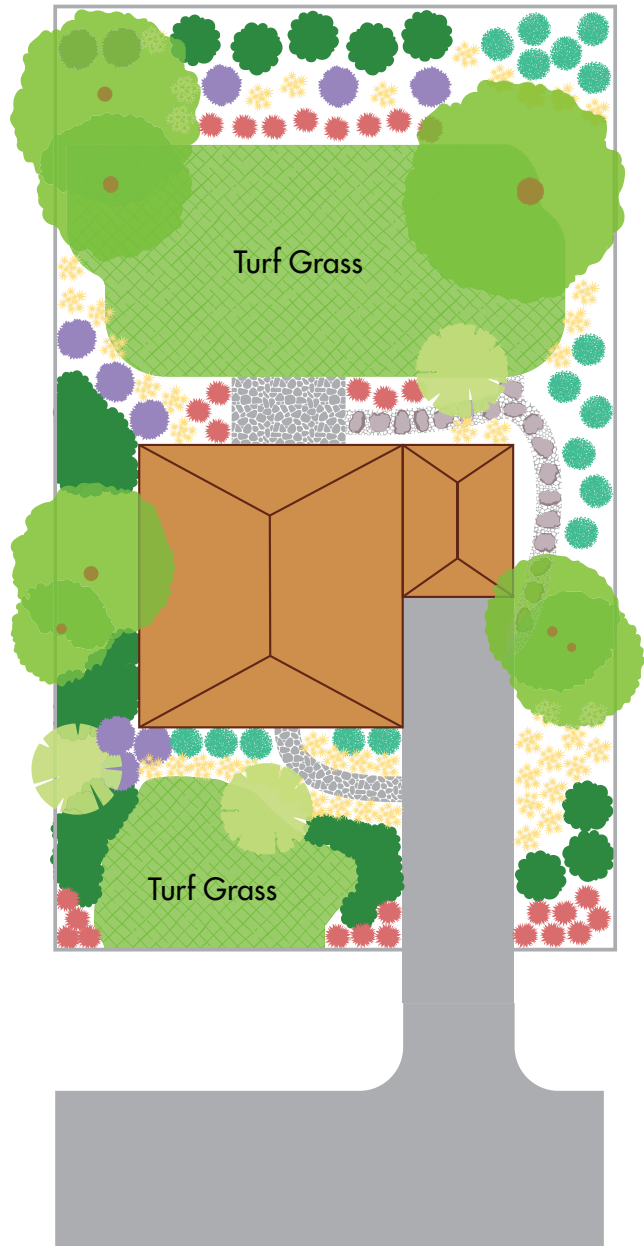
Edwards Plateau native shade trees, such as Texas Red Oak



Blue grama, buffalo grass, curly mesquite, Habiturf shortgrass, prairie grass seed mix or zoysia



A biodiverse selection of Edwards Plateau native shrubs, forbs, fruiting plants and grasses



Reduce water use and save money
with conservation rebates at
www.WaterSmart.org.

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RIVER AUTHORITY

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February 2025