

RESOURCES FOR WATER-WISE DESERT LANDSCAPING

BOOKS

Low Water-Use Plants for California and the Southwest, by Carol Schuler
- Photos and descriptions of drought-tolerant Southwest native plants and tips on xeriscape gardening.

Reimagining The California Lawn, by Carol Bornstein, David Fross, and Bart O'Brien – Features alternatives to the traditional lawn, including water-conserving plants from around the world, design ideas, and practical solutions to create a climate-adapted garden.

Xeriscape Handbook, by Gayle Weinstein – A how-to approach to resource-wise, low maintenance gardening that covers all the basic principles of xeriscape gardening.

Native Landscaping from El Paso to L.A., by Sally Wasowski - Native garden designs, photos, and descriptions of drought-tolerant desert plants.

Landscaping with Native Plants of the Southwest, by George Oxford Miller – Guide to choosing the best-performing native plants of the southwest (all are native to Arizona and New Mexico, but many are also native to California and perform well here).

DVD

Water-Wise Landscaping ~ Creating Beautiful Drought-Tolerant Landscaping in the High Deserts of the Southwest, produced by The SummerTree Institute and featuring Robin Kobaly – Interactive DVD with nearly four hours of expert information helping you to plan, design, plant, irrigate, and maintain an attractive drought-tolerant landscape. Contact your local water district or www.summertree.org for a copy.

WEBSITES

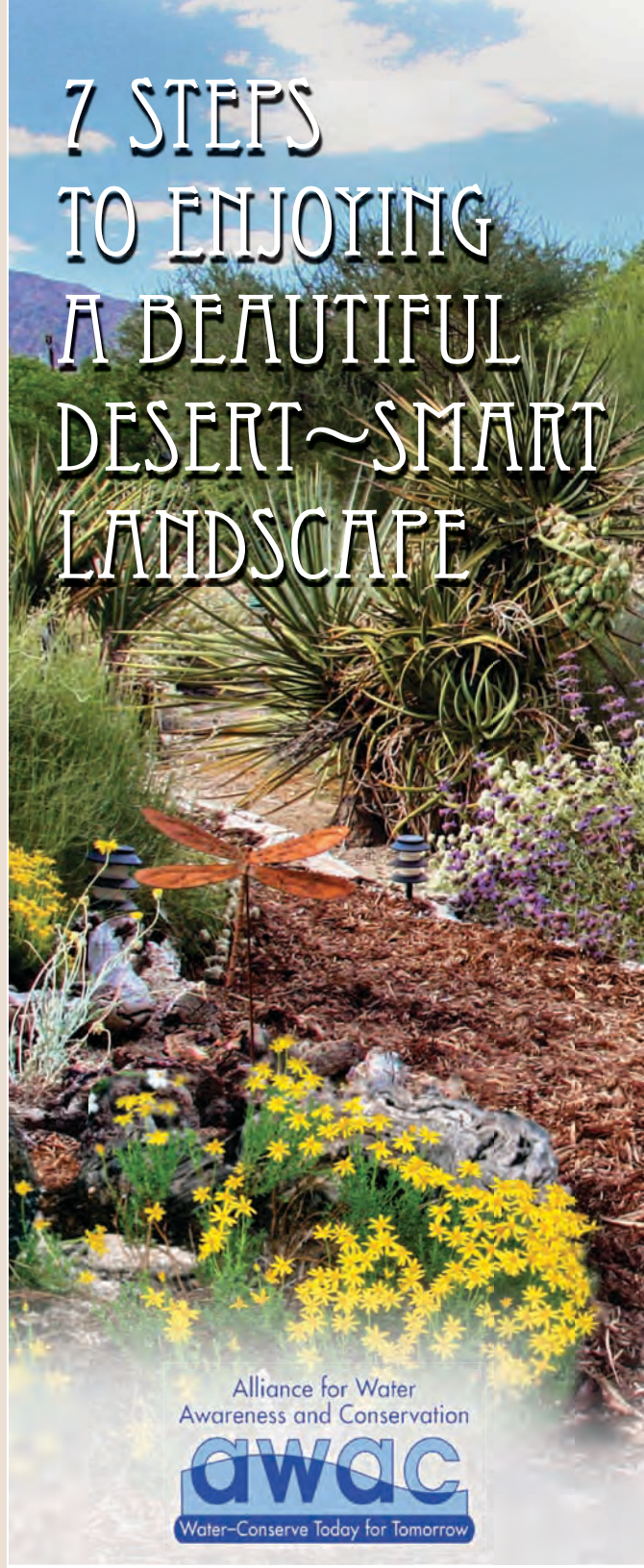
Tree of Life Nursery (www.californianativeplants.com) and **Las Pilitas Nursery** (www.laspilitas.com) - Both websites offer terrific gardening information & color photos of hundreds of California native plants.

H2Ouse - Water Saver Home: (www.h2ouse.org/tour/index.cfm) Take a virtual tour of southwest desert gardens. Zoom in on each plant to learn about it. Fun!

The Power of Plants (www.powerofplants.com) - Photos and lists of beautiful, low-maintenance drought-tolerant and desert native plants for high-desert southwest landscapes, plus tips on how to plant and care for your desert natives.

Brochure created by Robin Kobaly for MWA -- All photos ©2013 Robin Kobaly
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7 STEPS TO ENJOYING A BEAUTIFUL DESERT~SMART LANDSCAPE



CREATE A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN WHILE SAVING WATER, TIME, AND MONEY

The following steps serve as a basic guide to creating a successful landscape--one that holds up to our challenging weather extremes while delivering a rewarding yard experience with minimum water and maximum beauty.

STEP 1 SELECT DROUGHT-TOLERANT PLANTS.



Plants adapted to our climate of hot, dry summers and cold, wet winters will outperform plants from wetter, milder regions. Growing plants that are well-adapted to the extremes of our climate makes the best use of our water, time, and money. Visit local demonstration gardens (explore the gardens at Joshua Basin Water District in Joshua Tree, Mojave Water Agency in Apple Valley, Hi-Desert Water District in Yucca Valley, and Adelanto City Hall in Adelanto) to view beautiful examples and mature sizes of drought-tolerant plants adapted to our climate. Ask your local nursery which water-wise plants are available for your area, or check lists of climate-adapted plants at www.hdawac.org or www.saveourh2o.org. Consider planting some native shrubs, trees, perennials, and grasses that have evolved impressive water-saving strategies on their own (visit www.powerofplants.com for lists of star-performing native plants and how to grow them). Another “desert-smart” option is to select star-performing plants from other dry regions like the Mediterranean, Australia, and South Africa.

STEP 2 PLANT IN FALL IF POSSIBLE, OR EARLY SPRING.



Planting is best done from fall through early spring (from mid-October to early March). Avoid summer planting. During the fall, trees, shrubs, and perennials have very active root growth. In fact, up to 80% of the yearly root growth of these plants occurs in the fall, triggered by shorter daylight hours and cooler air temperatures while soils are still warm. Planting in fall saves water for many seasons to come. Roots that become well-established from fall through spring are already better prepared to withstand their first hot summer without frequent watering. A plant with an established root system resulting from a fall planting is ready and able to grow vigorously and flower heavily the following spring and summer. Plants need at least 6-8 weeks after planting to re-establish their roots before the extreme heat of summer.

STEP 3 GROUP PLANTS ACCORDING TO SIMILAR WATER NEEDS.



Keeping plants together that need the same amount of water promotes healthy growth and strong root systems, and reduces the risk of over- or under-watering. Grouping plants into water-use zones allows you to focus water use where it is most beneficial to the beauty of your yard, and also greatly simplifies your irrigation. Keep plants that use the most water close to your house where they are most visible, and plants that use the least water around the outermost areas of your property. By knowing and considering each plant's water needs to decide where to install it, you will achieve significant savings in water, time, and labor, and end up with a beautiful, water-efficient landscape.

STEP 4 TRAIN PLANTS TO GROW DEEP ROOTS, WITH INFREQUENT, DEEP SOAKINGS.



The deeper you encourage your plants' roots to grow, the less often you need to water. If plants are irrigated often with only shallow water penetration into the soil, you train roots to stay close to the surface, where soils heat up daily and dry out quickly. Deep, infrequent watering trains roots to seek deeper soil depths for moisture, and allows you to water much less frequently. For even more water efficiency, install deep water sleeves of perforated PVC pipe into the soil at the drip line of your plants to water with your hose or irrigation emitters below the soil surface to reduce evaporation.

STEP 5 LET NATURE HELP YOU SAVE WATER WITH MULCH AND RAINWATER HARVESTING.



By adding a generous layer of mulch several inches thick around the base of plants, you can help cool the soil, reduce evaporation, and also deter weed growth. A layer of gravel can also help retain moisture and reduce erosion. Keep as much rain on your property as possible by creating features to capture and direct water to your plants, instead of losing it down the driveway. Dry creek beds, earthen dams, and swales to contain rainwater while it soaks in can all replenish soil moisture for your plants. Moisture that percolates deep into soil is a long-lasting treasure that your plants can tap into for months to come. You can also collect rainwater from downspouts in covered cisterns, especially ones with spigots to attach a hose for easy watering. It's a great feeling to harvest today's rain for tomorrow's use.

STEP 6 INSTALL A DRIP IRRIGATION SYSTEM.



Tiny emitters attached to flexible tubing can direct water flow exactly where it's needed—directly over the root-ball where your plants can absorb it. Water-saving devices can be very easy to install, and your water savings can start immediately. Home-improvement stores or your local nursery can help you get started.

STEP 7 INSTALL AN AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION TIMER OR A SMART CONTROLLER.

Even a simple irrigation timer can help you keep your plants healthy and watered for optimum water use. When setting your timers, it is better to irrigate less frequently for a longer



time to encourage deep root growth, rather than frequently for short amounts of time. Your soils will tell you if you are watering them properly. Porous soils like sand and decomposed granite absorb water faster than dense soils like clay and caliche. If water puddles or runs off because you are adding it faster than the soil can absorb it, shorten your watering times. Adjust your watering schedule each season. Make sure to turn off or reset your timers manually to respond to rain or drought periods. Check the soil moisture around the root ball of your plants to determine when to irrigate again after rain.

