

XERISCAPE™

In recent years, water conservation has become vitally important to all of us in Florida. Due to the area's increasing population and the threat of droughts, we must do all we can to conserve water year-round. Landscapes can put the greatest demand on our urban water supply, often accounting for more than 50% of all the water used for home consumption. Conserving water through creative landscaping is what Xeriscape is all about.

Simply selecting the most suitable plants, shrubs and trees for our environment and applying a few basic Xeriscape methods will substantially reduce your landscape water needs. You can save from 30-to-80% of your outside water-use with a Xeriscape landscape.


In addition to saving water, a Xeriscape landscape saves you time and money. Landscapes designed with Xeriscape principles typically require less maintenance and will better tolerate droughts, and resist diseases and insects, as well.


Whether your landscape is already established, or you're starting new, take a moment to learn how you can benefit from the water-wise concepts of a Xeriscape landscape. Remember, water is the lifeblood of Florida. Don't bleed us dry. Plant it smart and Xeriscape.

Plant It Smart

Seven Steps To XERISCAPE

Although the word itself may be unfamiliar, Xeriscape utilizes common landscaping principles which have been known by industry professionals for years. By following these simple principles, you can still enjoy all the lush beauty of a Florida landscape and, at the same time, save water, time and money.


 **1. Design.** Crucial to the long-term success of a Xeriscape landscape is careful planning and design. Taking time to plan will allow you to minimize your initial investment by installing your Xeriscape landscape in phases. First, make a simple site plan drawing of your property, noting any slopes, drainage problems, existing plants and trees, or other factors that will determine your landscape needs. In selecting plants, you will need to know which areas of your site are in full sun, or shaded, and also the areas that will need to be irrigated.


 **2. Plant selection.** When buying new plants, look for those labeled drought-tolerant. Group plants together according to their sunlight and water needs to eliminate unnecessary watering. Refer to your original site plan and determine what areas of your landscape fall into the following three zones, then select your plants accordingly.


Natural Zones. Plants in these areas will live on rainfall alone. These plants can be native plants that thrive in full sun, or they can be cultivated plants that have adapted and are more suitable for shade areas. Try to incorporate many of your drought-tolerant existing plants into your new Xeriscape. Most of these plants have already adapted to our climate and will probably need no additional watering.


Low-Water Zones. Plants in these areas will be able to survive mostly on rainfall, but sometimes may require a little additional watering in times of drought.


Moderate Water Zones. These areas will require frequent waterings and should be limited to serve as the focal points of your Xeriscape landscape. Keep these areas functional, as in entryway flower gardens, grass areas, or fruit and vegetable gardens.

 **3. Improve the soil.** Florida soils are mostly sand and do not absorb or hold moisture well. Mix organic matter, such as homemade compost, peat, manure or topsoil into your flower or vegetable gardens to improve the soil's ability to retain water. The best soil contains equal amounts of all three of the major soil components — sand, silt, clay.

 **4. Practical turf areas.** Turf grass requires more water and maintenance than any other part of your landscape. Always look for drought-tolerant varieties when installing new turf areas. Aside from areas needed for recreation, and run-off control, consider other alternatives. Attractive ground covers, mulched gardens and walkways, and low shrubs are just a few of your options.

 **5. Water wisely.** By grouping plants according to their water needs, you can plan your sprinkler system to use water more efficiently. Remember, natural zones will need only rainfall, low-water plants will require only a minimal amount of watering, and moderate water zones will need frequent watering. Sprinkler heads that spray work the best for lawns, but drip, bubble and micro-sprinklers are more appropriate for planted areas. Inspect your sprinkler system weekly. Broken or misaligned heads waste water. Also check your automatic timers. You should only water when needed, and only in the early morning hours to prevent evaporation.

 **6. Use mulches.** Mulches are important to Xeriscapes because they reduce evaporation of moisture from the soil. Two-to-three inches of mulch on garden beds and walkways also reduces weeds and slows erosion. Appropriate mulches for Florida include shredded or chipped bark, pine needles and leaves.

 **7. Proper maintenance.** Xeriscapes typically require less maintenance than normal landscapes. Important tips to remember are:

- Don't over-water. Overwatering will only increase the risk of plant disease and threaten the health of your plants.
- Don't over-fertilize. Excessive fertilizing promotes fast but weak growth, and increases the amount of water a plant needs. Use the appropriate fertilizers in limited quantities. New high-nitrogen fertilizer blends support root growth and can help make turf more drought-tolerant.
- When mowing your lawn, keep your blade sharp and raise your lawnmower to its highest setting. This encourages the grass roots to grow deeper, making your lawn more drought-tolerant.
- Prune your plants properly. Excessive or improper pruning practices only increase a plant's need for water.

Incorporating Xeriscape principles into your landscape is easy and doesn't require a large investment. By following these simple tips and guidelines, you can soon turn your landscape into a lush and beautiful Xeriscape. A Xeriscape that saves you time and money but, most importantly, protects the environment and saves our most valuable resource, water.

Important

As an immediate requirement of CS/HB 91, the Xeriscape™ Bill, effective May 9, 1991, the act requires...Any person who purchases and installs an automatic lawn sprinkler system...shall install a rain sensor device or switch which will override the irrigation cycle of the sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred. Enforcement of this section is covered in Florida Statutes sections 125.568 and 166.048.

For information on retrofitting irrigation systems, contact a certified specialist in your area.

DEFINITIONS: *Exotic*—a non-indigenous species, or one introduced to this state, either purposefully or accidentally. A naturalized exotic, such as those listed here, has escaped into the wild where it reproduces on its own either sexually or asexually. *Native*—a species already occurring in Florida at the time of European contact (1500). *Invasive*—a variable condition defined by the category to which the species is assigned.

Abbreviations used: for "Gov. list": P = Prohibited by Fla. Dept. of Environmental Protection, N = Noxious weed listed by Fla. Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services and/or U.S. Department of Agriculture. for "Reg. Dis.": N = north, C = central, S = south, referring to each species' current distribution in general regions of Florida (not its potential range in the state).

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For more information on invasive exotic plants, including links to related web pages, visit the

Florida EPPC web site: <http://www.fleppc.org>

Category I - Species that are invading and disrupting native plant communities in Florida. This definition does not rely on the economic severity or geographic range of the problem, but on the documented ecological damage caused.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Reg. Dis.	Gov. List	Scientific Name	Common Name	Reg. Dis.	Gov. List
<i>Abrus precatorius</i>	rosary pea	C, S		<i>Lonicera japonica</i>	Japn. honeysuckle	NCS	
<i>Acacia auriculiformis</i>	earleaf acacia	S		<i>Lygodium japonicum</i>	Jap. climbing fern	NCS	N
<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>	mimosa, silk tree	N, C		<i>Lygodium microphyllum</i>	Old World climbing fern	C, S	N
<i>Albizia lebbek</i>	woman's tongue	C, S		<i>Macfadyena unguis-cati</i>	cat's-claw vine	NCS	
<i>Ardisia crenata</i>	coral ardisia	N, C		<i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i>	melaleuca	C, S	P, N
<i>Ardisia elliptica</i>	shoebuttan ardisia	S		<i>Melia azedarach</i>	Chinaberry	NCS	
<i>Asparagus densiflorus</i>	asparagus-fern	C, S		<i>Mimosa pigra</i>	catclaw mimosa	C, S	P, N
<i>Bauhinia variegata</i>	orchid-tree	C, S		<i>Nandina domestica</i>	heavenly bamboo	N	
<i>Bischofia javanica</i>	bischofia	C, S		<i>Nephrolepis cordifolia</i>	sword fern	NCS	
<i>Calophyllum antillanum</i>	santa maria	S		<i>Nephrolepis multiflora</i>	Asian sword fern	C, S	
<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i>	Australian pine	NCS	P	<i>Neyraudia reynaudiana</i>	Burma reed	C, S	N
<i>Casuarina glauca</i>	suckering A. pine	C, S	P	<i>Paederia cruddasiana</i>	sewer vine	S	N
<i>Cestrum diurnum</i>	day jessamine	C, S		<i>Paederia foetida</i>	skunk vine	N, C	N
<i>Cinnamomum camphora</i>	camphor tree	NCS		<i>Panicum repens</i>	torpedo grass	NCS	
<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	taro, wild taro	NCS		<i>Pennisetum purpureum</i>	Napier grass	C, S	
<i>Colubrina asiatica</i>	latherleaf	S		<i>Pistia stratiotes</i>	water-lettuce	NCS	P
<i>Cupaniopsis anacardioides</i>	carrotwood	C, S	N	<i>Psidium cattleianum</i>	strawberry guava	C, S	
<i>Dioscorea alata</i>	winged yam	NCS	N	<i>Psidium guajava</i>	guava	C, S	
<i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i>	air-potato	NCS	N	<i>Pueraria montana</i>	kudzu vine	NCS	N
<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>	water-hyacinth	NCS	P	<i>Rhodomyrtus tomentosa</i>	downy rose-myrtle	C, S	N
<i>Eugenia uniflora</i>	Surinam-cherry	C, S		<i>Rhoeo spathacea</i>	oyster plant	S	
<i>Ficus microcarpa</i>	laurel fig	S		<i>Sapium sebiferum</i>	Chinese tallow	NCS	N
<i>Hydrilla verticillata</i>	hydrilla	NCS	P, N	<i>Scaevola sericea</i>	beach naupaka	C, S	
<i>Hygrophila polysperma</i>	green hygro	NCS	P, N	<i>Schefflera actinophylla</i>	schefflera	C, S	
<i>Hymenachne amplexicaulis</i>	West Indian marsh grass	C, S		<i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i>	Brazilian pepper	NCS	P, N
<i>Imperata cylindrica</i>	cogon grass	NCS	N	<i>Senna pendula</i>	Christmas senna	C, S	
<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i>	water-spinach	C	P, N	<i>Solanum tampicense</i>	wetland nightshade	C, S	N
<i>Jasminum dichotomum</i>	Gold Coast jasmine	C, S		<i>Solanum torvum</i>	susumber	S	N
<i>Jasminum fluminense</i>	Brazilian jasmine	C, S		<i>Solanum viarum</i>	tropical soda apple	NCS	N
<i>Lantana camara</i>	lantana	NCS		<i>Syzygium cumini</i>	Java plum	S	
<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>	Chinese privet	NCS		<i>Tectaria incisa</i>	incised halberd fern	S	
				<i>Thespesia populnea</i>	seaside mahoe	C, S	
				<i>Tradescantia fluminensis</i>	white-flowered wandering Jew	N, C	
				<i>Urochloa mutica</i>	Pará grass	C, S	

Category II - Species that have shown a potential to disrupt native plant communities. These species may become ranked as Category I, but have not yet demonstrated disruption of natural Florida communities.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Reg. Dis.	Gov. List	Scientific Name	Common Name	Reg. Dis.	Gov. List
<i>Adenantha pavonina</i>	red sandalwood	S		<i>Melinis minutiflora</i>	molasses grass	S	
<i>Agave sisalana</i>	sisal hemp	C, S		<i>Merremia tuberosa</i>	wood-rose	S	
<i>Aleurites fordii</i>	tung oil tree	N		<i>Murraya paniculata</i>	orange-jessamine	S	
<i>Alstonia macrophylla</i>	devil-tree	S		<i>Myriophyllum</i>	Eurasian	N, C	P
<i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i>	alligator weed	NCS	P	<i>spicatum</i>	watermilfoil		
<i>Anredera leptostachya</i>	Madeira vine	S		<i>Ochrosia parviflora</i>	kopsia	C, S	
<i>Antigonon leptopus</i>	coral vine	NCS		<i>Oeceoclades maculata</i>	lawn orchid	C, S	
<i>Aristolochia littoralis</i>	calico flower	N, C		<i>Passiflora biflora</i>	2-flowr. passion v.	S	
<i>Arystasia gangetica</i>	Ganges primrose	C, S		<i>Passiflora foetida</i>	stinking passion v.	C, S	
<i>Begonia cucullata</i>	wax begonia	N, C		<i>Phoenix reclinata</i>	Senegal date palm	C, S	
<i>Broussonetia papyrifera</i>	paper mulberry	NCS		<i>Phyllostachys aurea</i>	golden bamboo	N, C	
<i>Callisia fragrans</i>	inch plant	C, S		<i>Pteris vittata</i>	Chinese brake fern	NCS	
<i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i>	Australian pine	C, S	P	<i>Ptychosperma elegans</i>	solitary palm	S	
<i>Cereus undatus</i>	night-blooming C.	C, S		<i>Rhynchelytrum repens</i>	Natal grass	NCS	
<i>Clerodendron bungei</i>	scented glorybower	NCS		<i>Ricinus communis</i>	castor bean	NCS	
<i>Cryptostegia madagascariensis</i>	rubber vine	C, S		<i>Ruellia brittoniana</i>	Mexican petunia	NCS	
<i>Cyperus alternifolius</i>	umbrella plant	C, S		<i>Sansevieria hyacinthoides</i>	bowstring hemp	NCS	
<i>Cyperus proflifer</i>	dwarf papyrus	C		<i>Sesbania punicea</i>	purple sesban	NCS	
<i>Dalbergia sissoo</i>	Indian rosewood	C, S		<i>Solanum diphyllum</i>	2-leaf nightshade	NCS	
<i>Eleagnus pungens</i>	silverthorn	N, C		<i>Solanum jamaicense</i>	Jamaica nightshade	C	
<i>Enterolobium contortisliquum</i>	ear-pod tree	C		<i>Syngonium podophyllum</i>	arrowhead vine	C, S	
<i>Epipremnum pinnatum</i> cv. Aureum	pothos	S		<i>Syzygium jambos</i>	rose-apple	C, S	
<i>Ficus altissima</i>	false banyan	S		<i>Terminalia catappa</i>	tropical almond	C, S	
<i>Flacourtia indica</i>	governor's plum	S		<i>Tribulus cistoides</i>	burnnut	C, S	
<i>Flueggea virosa</i>	Chinese waterberry	S		<i>Triphasia trifoliata</i>	limeberry	S	
<i>Hibiscus tiliaceus</i>	mahoe	C, S		<i>Urena lobata</i>	Caesar's weed	NCS	
<i>Hiptage benghalensis</i>	hiptage	S		<i>Wedelia trilobata</i>	wedelia	NCS	
<i>Jasminum sambac</i>	Arabian jasmine	S		<i>Wisteria sinensis</i>	Chinese wisteria	N, C	
<i>Koelreuteria elegans</i>	golden rain tree	N, C		<i>Xanthosoma sagittifolium</i>	elephant ear	C, S	
<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i>	lead tree	C, S					
<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	glossy privet	N, C					
<i>Livistona chinensis</i>	Chinese fan palm	C, S					