

## Getting Started:



Xeriscaping is simply landscaping and gardening that reduces or eliminates the need for supplemental water from irrigation.

This is often achieved through the use of a combination of drought-resistant plants, drip-irrigation, proper soils, applying mulch to retain moisture, and a little creativity. Xeriscapes are often used to replace water intensive lawns, often with stunning results!

We will be focusing on how to achieve a xeriscape using drought-resistant plants native to our region. The main plants that we are focusing on are Acacia Trees, Juniper Berries, Fireweed, Kinnikinnick, and Oregon Grape.

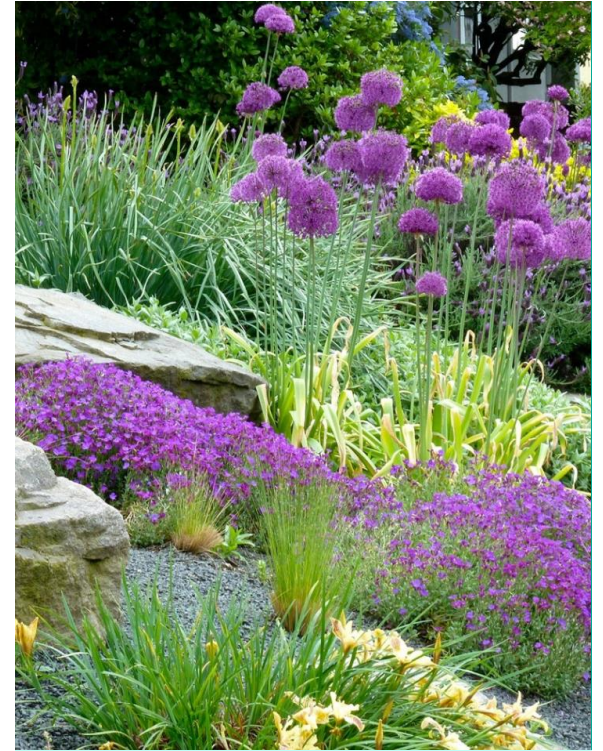
## Tips:

- Use porous material for walkways and patios to prevent wasteful runoff and keep water in your yard
- Reduce the amount of lawn in your yard by planting shrubs and ground covers appropriate to your site
- Use a layer of organic mulch on the surface of your planting beds to minimize weed growth that competes for water and help plants maintain moisture
- Leave lower branches on trees and shrubs and allow leaf litter to accumulate on the soil below. This keeps the soil cooler and reduces evaporation
- Plant in spring and fall, when watering requirements are lower
- Group plants with similar watering needs together to avoid overwatering some and under watering others
- Plant species native to your region
- Start a compost pile. Using compost in your garden adds water-holding organic matter to the soil
- Collect rainwater in rain barrels and use this water for your garden rather than tap water



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# XERISCAPING 101: Low Water Gardening with Native Plants

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# Some Great Native Plants for Xeriscaping

## Acacia Trees:



Acacia Trees come in many different varieties, and these can be found around the world. Most of the varieties can be found in Australia, while some grow in Hawaii, and central and North America. While these trees are not technically native to our area, they grow naturally along the more Southern portion of the West Coast of North America, and are common in California and Arizona. Due to our warming climate, their natural range is shifting north, and they have been found to thrive on the Sunshine Coast. The wood of the Acacia was vital in the ship building industry in the 1700's, and is still commonly harvested today. Other parts of the tree are used to make glues, thickening agents in foods, dye ink, make perfumes, and the seeds are eaten raw or in sauces. The many blossoms of these trees also attract Butterflies, which act as pollinators for the rest of your garden! These trees do exceptionally well in dry weather, sometimes only starting to grow in exceptionally dry seasons. It is best to plant them in an area where they are in direct sunlight, and have medium porous, well-drained soil.

## Kinnikinnick or Bearberry:



Kinnikinnick, or Bearberry, is a creeping plant found in the Northern half of North America. It has edible leaves, and berries, and the leaves can sometimes be used as medicine. First Nations people in our area traditionally ate the berries, often mixed with oil or grease to make up for their dry, mealy texture. This plant makes a good replacement for invasive groundcover plants like English Ivy or Periwinkle. It likes sun or partial shade, sandy soil, and is drought and salt tolerant, making it perfect for a waterfront garden.

## Oregon Grape:



Oregon Grape is native to Western North America, tolerates poor soils, and is resistant to drought. Its sour but edible berries attract birds, and can be used to make wine or purple dye. This plant is deer-resistant and grows best in the shade of pine and fir forests. It will grow in narrow spots and over top of obstacles, making it a good plant to fill gaps and conceal things like water pipes in gardens. Some varieties can grow up to six feet tall, allowing it to be used as a hedge for a yard.

## Fireweed or Evening Primrose:



Fireweed is a plant native to North America, sometimes known as Evening Primrose due to the fact that the blossoms open in the evening. It is pollinated by moths and bees, and flourishes in disturbed soils. Fireweed earned its name due to the fact that it is often one of the first plants to grow back after a fire in a region. The seeds of the plant are carried on the wind, often spreading long distances, sometimes hundreds of kilometers.

## Juniper Berries:



Juniper is perhaps most well-known as being used to make Gin, but it has also been recorded being traditionally used by Native Americans as medicine. It is a drought and deer resistant plant that prefers sandy soil and lots of sun. It is a low-growing plant, which thrives in low-water or rock garden scenarios. It attracts birds with its blue berries, and has a distinctive fragrance. There are many forms of juniper, from creeping ground-covers, to taller growing, hedge shaped varieties, making them ideal for many different uses in gardens.