



NATIVE PLANTS AND XERISCAPING

Choosing native plants allows developed landscapes to coexist, rather than compete with nature. The benefits of native landscaping include a reduced need for pesticides and fertilizers, as well as an increased biodiversity and sustainability. Many gardeners are turning to native landscaping to manage storm water, reduce maintenance, conserve water and promote plant and wildlife conservation.



WHAT IS XERISCAPING?

To begin, we'll look at the word itself: Xeriscape. Pronounced "zeer-i-scape," it's a combination of two Greek words: "xeros" (dry) and "scape" (view).

Xeriscaping doesn't have to mean a bunch of tumbleweeds. It works best when native plants are used. You can select a myriad of plant varieties from your own region to make your xeriscaped garden beautiful and sustainable. A xeriscaped lawn can look more attractive and colorful than a regular one. Nativescaping and xeriscaping can lower water use for landscapes by more than half.

USING NATIVE PLANTS



Native plants provide a beautiful, hardy, drought resistant, low maintenance landscaping while benefiting the environment. Native plants, once established, save time and money by eliminating or significantly reducing the need for fertilizers, pesticides, watering and lawn maintenance. They can also protect the environment and help minimize flooding.

- *Native plants do not require fertilizers and reduce the need for pesticides.* Vast amounts of fertilizers are applied to lawns. Excess phosphorus and nitrogen (the main components of fertilizers) run off into lakes and rivers causing excess algae growth and pollution. This depletes oxygen in our waters, harms aquatic life and interferes with recreational uses. Pesticides can be harmful to birds and wildlife and often end up polluting our waterways. Native plants are naturally pest resistant.
- *Native plants require less water than lawns.* A traditional lawn requires significant amounts of water to thrive. In some areas, lawn irrigation makes up more than 60% of total household water consumption.
- *Native plants are good for your yard and for the environment.* They significantly reduce water runoff which can increase groundwater recharge and decrease flooding. Nativescaping can also filter out pollutants, keeping harmful chemicals and sediment out of rivers, streams and lakes.
- *Native plants provide shelter and food for wildlife.* Native plants attract a variety of birds, butterflies, and other wildlife by providing diverse habitats and food sources. Closely mowed lawns are of little use to most wildlife.
- *Native plants save money.* Studies show that maintaining native landscapes over time costs nearly 2/3 less per acre than non-native turf grasses.

If you're a fan of Spring Lake, GO NATIVE! For additional information, visit MeadowsWater.org





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LEARN MORE ABOUT NATIVE PLANTS AND XERISCAPING

- centraltexasgardening.info/xeriscaping.htm
- xeriscape.sustainablesources.com/
- wildflower.org/
- npsot.org/wp/
- txsmartscape.com/



LET'S DO THIS AT HOME!

MATERIALS:

- empty eggshells (when you make eggs, keep the shells and wash them out!)
- Potting soil
- Seeds (your choice!)
- Egg carton for holding your seedlings

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Take the eggshells, add potting soil, and put 2-3 seeds in each eggshell.
2. Carefully water. (not too much!)
3. Put in a sunny place, but mist every day - your kids will love this!
4. Once they sprout, you can put the whole eggshell in the ground! The roots will break through the eggshell and provide calcium for the plant.



EXPLORE NATIVE PLANTS AND XERISCAPING

The Legend of the Bluebonnet by Tomie DePaola

Roots, Shoots, Buckets & Boots: Gardening Together with Children by Sharon Lovejoy

The Dry Gardening Handbook: Plants and Practices for a Changing Climate by Olivier Filippi

Xeriscaping : Planning and Planting Low-Water Gardens by Mark Rumary

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