

**Caring for your landscape doesn't need to be difficult, time-consuming, or use a lot of water. There are easy things you can do to give grass, plants, shrubs, and trees the resources they need to produce beautiful colors and texture in the garden and still use water efficiently and effectively. Whether you are maintaining your current landscape, or planning a new one, remember that adding compost, mulching, and maintaining your irrigation schedule and system will keep your landscape healthy for years to come.**

### **Build your soil!**



Adding amendments to soil - such as compost - on a regular basis is one of the easiest ways to have a productive and healthy landscape while conserving water. Mixing compost into the top six

inches of your soil improves its ability to hold water and increases nutrients and beneficial soil organisms. Soils rich with organic matter act like a sponge for water, preventing runoff and storing more water in the root zone where plants can use it.

### **Mulch, mulch, mulch!**

Evaporation is the major source of water loss from soil and therefore your plants. Adding a layer of mulch around your plants can significantly reduce the amount of soil-water evaporation that results from the sun and wind. Mulches can also help reduce erosion and assist with weed control.



Mulches come in a variety of shapes, sizes and colors, and should be chosen according to your personal preference. Mulch can be organic (bark, wood chips, or compost), or

inorganic (gravel or landscape cloth). Both provide a protective layer covering the soil surface. Organic mulches should be applied annually or as needed throughout the year. To be most effective, apply 1-2 inches of compost, leaves, sawdust, or 2-4 inches of coarsely shredded bark or wood chips.

### **Water Wisely!**

Many of us are guilty of overwatering our landscapes by watering too much, too often. Not only is this practice wasteful, but it can harm plant growth and health.

- **Adjust your watering schedule.** Pay attention to rain showers, cooler weather, and periods of extended high temperatures. Adjust your watering times accordingly.



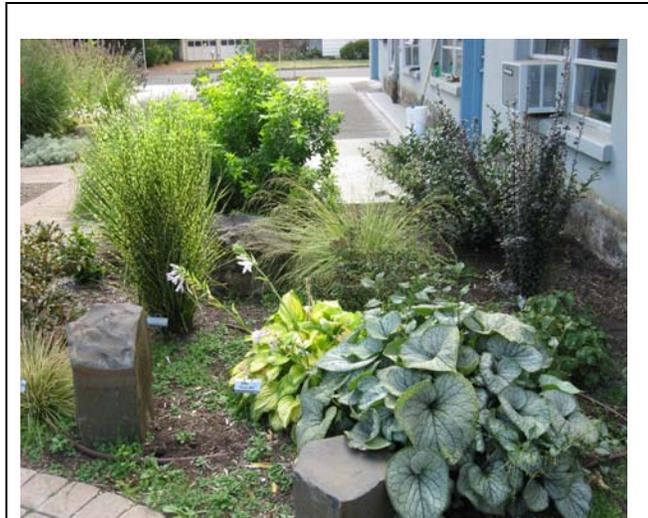
- **Established trees and shrubs typically don't need much supplemental water.** Except for maybe a deep soak or two in the summer, established trees and shrubs don't need a great deal of additional water. They have root systems that tap into deeper sources of water. Newly planted trees, however, need regular watering for the first couple of years.
- **Water in the morning or evening.** Heat and wind cause water to evaporate more quickly. Watering early in the morning or later in the evening when the sun is low in the sky helps keep evaporation to a minimum.
- **Watch for puddles and runoff.** Avoid applying water faster than it can soak into the soil.
- **Water lawns with 1 inch of water per week (more during long, hot dry spells).** Water lawns separately from other plants. A good rule-of-thumb for watering your landscape is to apply 50% of what you put on grass, on perennials and shrubs, and 75% for vegetables (although new plant starts require more water).

- **Sign up for the Weekly Watering Number.** The Regional Water Providers Consortium takes the guesswork out of watering by e-mailing you the amount of water (in inches) your lawn will need each week. The weekly watering number is available every Thursday from April-September. It takes into account local weather according to your zip code. Sign up at [www.conserveh2o.org](http://www.conserveh2o.org)
- **Aerate or de-thatch your lawn.** If water isn't penetrating the soil, your lawn may need to be aerated or de-thatched.

### Keep it up!

Routine maintenance of your landscape is the trick to keeping plants happy and healthy. Regular pruning, fertilization, weeding, and pest control will keep plants at their peak and more resistant to insects, disease, and extreme temperatures.

Don't forget to check your irrigation system several times a year to make sure it is providing the correct amount of water where and when you want it. Fix leaks and broken sprinkler heads immediately and don't water your sidewalk or driveway!



### Visit the Hazelwood Conservation Demonstration Garden

The Water Conservation Garden at the Hazelwood HydroPark (1017 NE 117th Ave.) was designed to showcase water-efficient gardening practices, as well as provide a welcoming "front porch" for the East Portland Neighborhood Office. Looking for inspiration on how to make your landscape water-efficient? Come visit!

### Additional Resources

Get more information on landscape planning and maintenance from the resources listed below. Before long you will be using water wisely while maintaining a healthy and beautiful landscape

**Brochures are available at the [Portland Water Bureau web site](#) or by calling (503) 823-4527**

- [Water-Efficient Plants for the Willamette Valley:](#) This beautiful plant guide outlines water-efficient trees, shrubs, bulbs, perennials, ground covers, and ornamental grasses suited to our climate and that require less maintenance once established.
- [7 Basic Steps for Creating Water Efficient Landscapes:](#) The seven steps in this brochure can help you create a water-efficient landscape that is colorful and easy to maintain. It includes recommendations of plants appropriate for the Pacific Northwest.
- [Selecting a Landscape Contractor](#) & [Selecting an Irrigation Contractor:](#) These brochures provide tips for selecting a landscape contractor for designing and maintaining a landscape, and installing an irrigation system.
- [Planting and Maintaining a Lawn:](#) This brochure provides detailed information on how to design and maintain a lawn to reduce water consumption and maintain a healthy look.

### Web sites

The Hardy Plant Society of Oregon  
[www.hardyplantsociety.org](http://www.hardyplantsociety.org)

Native Plant Society of Oregon  
[www.npsoregon.org](http://www.npsoregon.org)

East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District  
<http://emswcd.org/>

Pacific Northwest Native Wildlife Gardening  
[www.tardigrade.org/natives/](http://www.tardigrade.org/natives/)

Oregon State University Extension Service Gardening Encyclopedia  
<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/>

Oregon State University Extension Service Online guide to plant disease control  
<http://plant-disease.ippc.orst.edu/index.cfm>

International Society of Arboriculture  
[www.treesaregood.com](http://www.treesaregood.com)