

## Xeriscaping: Low Water Gardening In Harmony With Your Local Climate

Have you given up on having a garden because of the high cost of water or restrictions on water use in your area? Then you need to take a look at xeriscaping. This gardening method creates beautiful landscapes using trees, shrubs, flowers and other plants that are acclimated to your local climate. Because you are using plants that grow naturally in your neighborhood, they normally need much less water and require much less care. And that's why xeriscaping is becoming so popular among home gardeners.

Xeriscaping has become particularly widespread in the desert southwest of the United States. Water is a scarce commodity, so financial and environmental pressures reinforce the need for gardens that require little or no watering.

So are you thinking about cacti right now? That's where most people go in their minds when someone talks about a garden that doesn't need water. Cactus gardens can be remarkably beautiful, but xeriscaping is not limited to this option. There are other ways to create a beautiful outdoor landscape that can thrive on natural rainfall.

Have you discovered those special water crystals that you add to your garden's soil? They are designed to absorb and hold water for about two weeks. This helps ration and release water so that your plants can get from one shower to the next without extra watering from you, and without drooping and turning brown.

Each time rain falls (or you water your garden), the crystals absorb the moisture, then begin to slowly release it back into the soil for your plants to use. Some potting soils on the market already contain these crystals, or you can buy the crystals by themselves to add to your garden as needed.

There are other ways to conserve water in your garden. Try adding a thick layer of mulch. Use natural materials like dry grass clippings, dead leaves, sawdust, bark, wood chips, etc. Not only will this help you recycle your own lawn waste, it also keeps the soil around your plants from drying out. This layer helps hold in moisture during the summer, and doubles as a blanket against the cold of mid-winter.

And then there's the plants. Cactus plants are not the only plants that thrive on small amounts of water. But they probably are the most efficient when it comes to moisture. Don't just think needles when you think of cacti. Most of these garden camels have gorgeous blooming flowers. Some even change color with the seasons.

Other low-water, drought-hardy plants to consider include the Desert Mallow and the California Poppy. These plants have flowers that range from orange to peach in color. Not only will they survive the dry season in style, they'll make your garden unique. Your harmonious landscape design will really stand out (in a good way) in your neighborhood.

When you first see some of these dry weather plants, you may be surprised. Their leaves look different with their pale hue and "hairy" look. However, they also attract hummingbirds and butterflies. And they prove that it is possible to have a garden that grows in harmony with your local climate while looking beautiful the whole time. Give xeriscaping a try, and help save your community's water.

### About the Author

Another great article from DIY Gardening Tips

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