

# "Xeriscape Landscaping"

## Achieve a Beautiful Landscape and Conserve Resources



CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

### THE SEVEN STEPS OF XERISCAPE

Learn the seven basic steps that you should follow to help you install a lawn using the principles of Xeriscape landscaping.

Xeriscaping refers to a method of landscape and garden design that minimizes water use.

**1. PLAN AND DESIGN** — Make a sketch of the area you plan to landscape and **consider the conditions of your yard**. For example, make a note of the areas that get lots of sun or areas that get lots of shade. Don't forget to consider the areas that get lots of water or are nearest to your sprinklers. Make note of areas where you walk or are used as pathways. Also consider the existing plants, trees and vegetation that you already have in your yard and the areas that plants and grass grow best.

**2. CHOOSE PROPER PLANTS** — When choosing new plants for your Xeriscape project, be careful to match each spot in your landscape plan with plants that grow best in the specific conditions of that spot. **Native vegetation placed in the right spot** will remain healthy and will need minimal irrigation once they are established. Consider each plant's mature height and width, its need for sun, shade, soil and water, and its tolerance to salt or temperature. Look for plants that can resist bugs, pests and disease. If they are healthy, you should try to preserve as many existing trees and shrubs as possible.

**3. OBTAIN A SOIL ANALYSIS** — A soil analysis can help you decide which plants are best suited to the conditions of your yard. You can find out your soil's pH balance— its level of acidity or alkalinity, and its composition, from sandy to clay. Call your local landscaper for information on how to obtain a soil analysis.

**4. WISE USE OF GRASS ENCOURAGED** — Grass can still play a role in a water conserving landscape. Plan **practical turf grass areas** where turf is most functional in the landscape plan, such as where children or pets will play, or for erosion control. In other areas, consider more water-thrifty alternatives such as groundcovers or mulched walkways.

**5. IRRIGATE EFFICIENTLY** — Group plants together based on their water needs. Put plants that need more water in moist areas and plants that prefer well-drained sites in drier areas. Group together plants that may need irrigation so that water is only used in limited areas. **Irrigate only when plants need water** or when rain is inadequate. Use the right irrigation system, proper sprinkler head and spacing for each area.

**6. USE MULCH FOR BORDERS AND TO ACCENT LANDSCAPED AREAS** — Mulch helps hold moisture in the soil, moderate temperature, slowly release nutrients, reduce weed growth and slow erosion. **Spread mulch 2 to 4 inches thick** around shrubs and trees and on flower beds, but be sure to keep mulch from coming into direct contact with plant stems.

**7. PROPER LAWN MAINTENANCE** — Maintain neat and health lawns. Remove weeds by hand before they get established and crowd out the plants you want. Too much water and fertilizer can promote weak growth and increase the need for pruning and mowing. Watch for pests and make sure they're truly a problem before waging war, then do it organically whenever possible.



Information Excerpted from "WaterWise: South Florida Landscapes," published by the South Florida Water Management District. For more Information, go to [www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov)



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