

## Xeriscape Basics

### City of Rio Rancho Marian Wrage



## Introduction to Xeriscape

xe·ri·scape

- 'zi(ə)rə,skāp, 'zerə-/
- a style of landscape design requiring little or no irrigation or other maintenance, used in arid regions.
- a garden or landscape requiring little or no irrigation.



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## 7 Basic Principles of Xeriscape

1. Develop a design
2. Reduce turf & high-water-use areas
3. Improve Soil
4. Select appropriate plants
5. Add Mulch
6. Irrigate efficiently
7. Maintenance program



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## 1. Develop a Design

Consider:

- Plants at maturity
- Collecting rainwater
- Shade, existing or needed
- Screening or wind protection
- Small lawn for kids or vegetable garden
- Focal points from windows/patios



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## Focal Point



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## Design for Water Harvesting



Design and Photo by  
Judith Phillips

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## Design Plan



Design by  
Judith Phillips



## 2. Reduce Turf & High-Water-Use Areas

- New Mexico averages 8" water
- Kentucky bluegrass=40-60" water (high water use)
- Warm season grasses
  - Blue Grama = low+ water use
  - Buffalo Grass = medium water use



## Low Water Use Turf Grass



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High Water Use Grass  
(but at least not too much turf)



3. Improve Soil

- Lawn, vegetable garden & fruit trees need a generous amount of compost added to the soil
- Native & xeric plants need much less organic matter
- Aerate lawns annually or more often



4. Select Appropriate Plants

- Choose native and low-water-use plants whenever possible
- Grouping plants of like water requirements makes zoning irrigation more efficient



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## Xeric Plants



## 5. Add Mulch

- Minimize evaporation
- Keeps roots cool in summer
- Weed reduction
- Erosion control



## Types of Mulches

- Fibrous mulches where plants like organic matter
  - Pecan shells, shredded bark, composted cotton burrs
- Stone mulches add texture where desert plants prefer improved drainage
  - Crusher fines, gravel



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## 6. Irrigate Efficiently



- Group plants by water needs
- Choose lawn sprinklers that spray droplets
- Apply water only where roots can access it and only as often and deeply as the plants require
- Adjust watering times to keep plants healthy without waste



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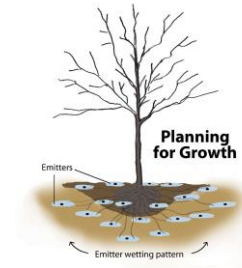
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## Watering Trees



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## 7. Maintenance Program

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- Remove fallen leaves
- Trim old flower stems
- Pull weeds
- Observe insect activity, intervene if necessary
- Monitor watering
- Fertilize plant as needed




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## Questions

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