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## SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF XERISCAPE

At Wild Boar Earthmovers, we believe that we are compelled to be good stewards of all of our natural resources, especially water. As such, we advocate and almost exclusively employ the Seven Principles of Xeriscape in all of the landscapes we install. Regardless of whether you hire a professional landscaper to install your landscape or you plan to install it yourself, following these simple steps will help you conserve our most precious resources.

### PLAN AHEAD

Design your Xeriscape project before you buy plants or start planting. Consider your needs, lifestyle, natural terrain, and microclimates. Be sure to plan for the mature size of the trees and plants you have selected. A well-planned Xeriscape garden will save water, be a place of beauty and increase the value of your home

### LIMIT TURF AREAS

Have a lawn only in areas where you will use it. A typical home's landscaping has a substantial amount of Kentucky bluegrass. Bluegrass requires 20" to 30" of moisture each growing season, drinking up about half of a homeowners annual water use. Bluegrass has its place in high traffic area, but consider a water conserving grass for other areas where you want turf. Alternatives to turf include shrub or perennial beds, patios, decks or mulches.

### IMPROVE SOIL

Add organic matter to your soil before you install an irrigation system or begin planting. Most Front Range soils contain more clay and less organic matter than needed to grow plants well. Add 2 to 3 cubic yards of organic matter, such as commercial compost or aged manure, for every 1000 square feet of landscape area. Good soil absorbs and retains water much better than poor soil. You will be rewarded with healthy grass and good plant growth with less water.

### IRRIGATE EFFICIENTLY

Plan the irrigation system at the same time you design the garden. Use the irrigation method that waters the plants in each area most efficiently. For grass, low-volume, low angle sprinklers irrigate the best. Drip, spray or bubbler emitters are most efficient for watering trees, shrubs, flowers and ground covers. Water deeply and infrequently to develop deep roots. The best time to water is between 9:00 PM and 9:00 AM to reduce water loss due to evaporation. To meet seasonal needs and weather conditions, adjust your sprinkler system regularly and install a rain shutoff device.

### CHOOSE LOW WATER PLANTS

Select from hundreds of beautiful, low water use plants. Planting a variety of plants with different heights, colors and textures creates interest and beauty. Plants with similar watering needs should be planted together. Nurseries have trees, shrubs, ground covers, perennials, herbs and wildflowers to fit your Xeriscape needs.

### USE MULCH

Cover planting areas with 2 to 4 inches of mulch to help conserve soil moisture and control weeds. Organic mulch such as bark and wood chips, pole peelings or leaf mold, decompose and improve soil texture but needs to be restored from time to time. Inorganic mulches such as rocks and gravel never need replacement and are good in windy spots. Apply mulch directly to the soil or over a poly-spun landscape fabric. Never use black plastic as it prevents air and water from reaching plant roots.

### MAINTAIN IT

Preserve the beauty of your Xeriscape garden with regular maintenance. Initially, maintenance is similar to a traditional landscape, but it decreases over time. Only a "zero-escape" takes no maintenance at all. Properly irrigate, weed, prune, fertilize and control pests to keep plants healthy. Help is available from landscape professionals, as well as a collection of other resources.

These principles are published by The City of Loveland Department Water and Power on their website located at [www.ci.loveland.co.us/wp/xeriscape/xerisevenprinciples.htm](http://www.ci.loveland.co.us/wp/xeriscape/xerisevenprinciples.htm) and have been reprinted by Wild Boar Earthmovers with permission for your information. Wild Boar Earthmovers is always available to offer free, no-obligation consultations on any of your landscape or Xeriscape projects.