

Planning Your Plants

Plants that are native to this region and tolerant of the seasonally dry summers require the least upkeep year-round. They're also best at helping absorb stormwater runoff, supporting healthy habitat for wildlife, and create beautiful landscapes for humans, too! This community garden showcases many 'water-wise' plant species including native trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses and groundcovers.

Proper site planning includes careful study of the conditions present before taking action. Identify any hazards or constraints, types of intended use, and all features that will need to fit into the project site. Prepare a master site plan to integrate all components from the start, rather than using a piecemeal approach.

Avoid the traditional approach of clearing & grading first to figure out how the site will be developed. This can cause unnecessary loss of native soils and existing vegetation, changes to the



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natural topography and drainage patterns, and soil compaction resulting in more erosion, runoff, and flooding. This approach often requires additional engineering and mitigation to make up for what was lost, costing more in the long run. Heavily altered landscapes with imported ornamentals generally require more watering and upkeep than naturally vegetated areas.

The Big Picture

Look at your site as a whole system and think about how the parts need to work together. Consider clustering structures together to leave more area for vegetated open space. Limit your lawn to just the area needed for active recreation. Think about soil conditions, sun exposure, wind patterns, and how big plants will be at maturity. Protect and amend the soil and use mulch to minimize water use. Consider site planning, rain barrels, rain gardens and native plant features as low impact development options for your property!