

## Consider this...

*Colorado Springs is in a semi-arid climate that receives, on average, 17" of precipitation each year.*

*As with much of the country, this figure has swung wildly in recent years, making it important to employ water smart gardening techniques and drought tolerant plants in your landscape.*

*Selection of hardy, drought tolerant plants that adapt well to our climate saves money on your water bill AND offers a beautiful, low maintenance landscape.*



Open Year-Round  
7 days a week

4955 Austin Bluffs Parkway  
80918 \* 574-8058

[www.phelangardens.com](http://www.phelangardens.com)

- \*local gardening information
- \*upcoming classes & events
- \*what's new at Phelan Gardens

### Phelan's E-News

Our newsletter is now offered monthly via e-mail. Sign up and receive timely seasonal advice, growing tips, and advance notice of special events.

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## Water-Smart Gardening

Curb water usage in your landscape with these water-smart gardening practices.



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# Getting Started

## WHAT YOU WATER

Whether you water with a hose-end sprinkler or an automatic sprinkler system, grouping your landscape plantings according to water need helps make the best use of water delivery...and saves you money!

A bed or border with hardy shrubs, trees, or perennials needs MUCH less water than a traditional lawn. So, put these areas on separate water zones. You will also have to water North/East locations less as they will sit in shade for a large part of the day. Plantings sited on West/South areas that are exposed to wind, more sun—and thus hotter sustained temperatures, may need more water.

Traditional bluegrass lawns need 1" of water per week in season. If there is no rainfall to supplement this, that means YOU must supply that irrigation. A lawn certainly has a purpose for many, but in our dry climate you might consider limiting your lawn to high use areas (kids, dogs, etc), opting for smaller sections or installing more drought tolerant buffalo/blue grama types that can take light foot traffic. If you don't use an existing lawn, consider replacing those areas with hardscaping, pathways or drought tolerant plants that will take far less water and maintenance each year.

## HOW YOU WATER

Avoid water loss via evaporation by watering during cooler times of the day — early morning or later in the evening after the sun goes down.

Measure how much your spray sprinklers are actually delivering and adjust accordingly.

How? Shallow cans work well when placed around your yard (ex. empty tuna cans). How much water do they contain after a 15-20 minute cycle? Perhaps you are watering too much?

Drip irrigation/soaker hoses are a GREAT water saver for areas of your landscape that contain hardy plants and trees. They efficiently deliver a slow soak to the roots. If you have an older sprinkler system, you may be amazed at how much water you save by changing from spray delivery to drip or soaker for beds and borders.

## SOIL PREP & MULCH

Adding organic matter such as compost or aged manure, to existing soil at planting time will help hold moisture at the root zone and improve the texture of both sandy and clay soil. This effort is often overlooked for new plantings, but it helps considerably for both plants and new lawns.

**Mulch!!!** Mulching your landscape with either bark or rock will greatly help to retain moisture.

If you grow vegetables or direct sow seed into your garden, layer a thin blanket (no more than 1") of untreated lawn clippings to these areas (no pesticides/herbicides!) This layer will help keep plants moist AND will break down to give you a natural source of nitrogen.

## DROUGHT TOLERANT PLANTS

All hardy plants are not created equal when it comes to flourishing in our dry climate. Of course native varieties will do well here. But there are hundreds of other non-natives that are able to adapt and grow as well as natives.

Phelan's offers many, many hardy perennials, herbs, shrubs, and trees for our semi-arid conditions. Not sure where to start? We're happy to offer advice for any of the plants we

carry. You may want to start with our 'Drought Tolerant Plants' brochure to give you an idea of selections. This brochure will give you an extensive listing of plants that can take drier conditions once established.

## NEW PLANTINGS!

Just a note about new plantings... Even though a plant is considered drought tolerant, you WILL have to give it regular water until the roots become established. This will definitely take one year and could take as many as 2-3 seasons.

During the growing season, twice a week watering is sufficient for many hardy, drought tolerant plants. But, many people new to Colorado may not realize that winter watering is also essential in our climate. We recommend at least once a month watering in winter when temps are at least 40 degrees.

## Demonstration Gardens

Drought tolerant landscapes need not look barren. To see a good selection of water-smart plants right here in our city...visit the Colorado Springs Utilities Xeriscape Demonstration Garden at 2855 Mesa Road, 80904. There is a smaller collection located just up the road from Phelan's at Cottonwood Creek Park 3920 Dublin Blvd, 80918. And, of course, the Denver Botanic Gardens is also a good spot to see many drought tolerant plants up close.

## WANT PERSONALIZED HELP?

Earth Expressions Landscaping and Maintenance is a full service landscaping and design firm based out of Phelan Gardens. They specialize in water-smart landscape renovation. Call them at (719) 591-9358 to inquire about a consultation. Other services include:

- Professional irrigation and plant installation
- Custom pergolas and arbors
- Expertly installed paver patios & walkways