

# Drought-Tolerant Landscaping

This playbook describes the process for designing and maintaining a landscape that conserves water. It includes steps for plant selection, soil preparation, and strategic irrigation to create an aesthetically pleasing environment that is resilient to drought conditions.

## Step 1: **Planning**

Assess the area to understand its climate, sun exposure, and soil type. Determine zones with similar watering needs. Create a design layout that includes areas of low, moderate, and no water use. Select plants that are native or adapted to your region's climate, as they will require less water.

## Step 2: **Soil Preparation**

Amend the soil with organic matter to improve water retention and drainage. If needed, reshape the terrain to create swales or basins to capture rainwater. Apply a thick layer of mulch around plants to reduce water evaporation from the soil.

## Step 3: **Plant Selection**

Choose drought-tolerant plants, prioritize perennials over annuals, and group plants with similar water needs. Consider plants with similar rooting depths to optimize water usage.

## **Step 4: Irrigation**

Install a drip irrigation system or soaker hoses to target water directly to plant roots, minimizing evaporation. Use a timer or a smart irrigation controller to water during the coolest parts of the day and adjust for rainfall. Regularly check the irrigation system for leaks or blockages.

## **Step 5: Maintenance**

Regularly prune and deadhead plants to encourage growth and prevent disease. Adjust the watering schedule based on seasonal changes and observed plant health. Limit lawn areas or replace traditional turf with drought-tolerant ground covers. Use best practices such as rainwater harvesting and gray water systems for supplemental irrigation.

# **General Notes**

## **Climate Zones**

Research specific plants that are best suited for your region's climate zone. Consider the USDA Hardiness Zone or other local guidelines for choosing the right plants.

## **Water Restrictions**

Be aware of local water use restrictions and guidelines. Adapting to these early in the design process will ease compliance and ensure a sustainable landscape.

## Seasonal Care

Different plants have varying water needs throughout the seasons. Factor in seasonal changes when planning your irrigation schedule to avoid over or under-watering.

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