

Outdoor Water Efficiency Starts with a Suitable Landscape

Spring has arrived, and now is the perfect time for outdoor planning. With a little strategy and knowledge, it's easy to design and maintain a landscape best suited to our climate. This is all the more important as we look for ways to be more water-wise knowing that here in the Valley, most water use occurs outdoors and not inside the home.

A well-designed, desert-adapted landscape can be more than just picturesque it can also help lower your water bill, save you time and money in upkeep, add value to your home and even reduce your electricity use. But creating an appropriate landscape for our climate doesn't mean they all have to be the same. You can add your own sense of style to ensure your outdoor living space is everything you want while still being efficient with your outdoor water use. And if you aren't quite sure where to start, we are here to help.



Proper planning is a must

Planning should be a priority when designing your landscape because a beautiful, functional yard begins with a great plan. When designing your landscape, consider preferences, such as the look you want to achieve, how you will use your yard, how much time you want to spend caring for your yard, and your budget as you develop your unique plan.

To help with all phases of planning and building your yard precisely how you like, there are resources and tips to help design, install, and maintain your landscape on the [Xeriscaping: Landscaping with Style in the Arizona Desert](#) website, which is a sensible approach to building an attractive landscape that conserves water and is based on seven water-wise principles.

Pick the right plants

The desert offers a surprisingly diverse selection of low-water-use landscape plants and trees. Still, figuring out how to utilize these plants to their full potential can be intimidating. To assist you with selecting the perfect plants for your yard, we have the ideal interactive resource for homeowners, businesses, and anyone looking for a little extra desert-adapted flower power with the [Plants for the Arizona Desert](#) website. This searchable site will help take the guesswork out of finding the most suitable trees, shrubs, groundcovers, vines, cacti, succulents, grasses, perennials, or annuals. Each page will give you the practical information you need, such as sun or shade requirements, hardiness, water use, growth rate, foliage detail, and show whether or not the plant attracts wildlife or creates litter.

Get some help and inspiration

We have numerous additional [tools for a successful landscape](#), which include [educational workshops](#) where you can learn about various topics, including sustainable desert landscapes and how to prune a tree for health and beauty. Learn how to manage your irrigation controller, find and fix leaks, and unravel the mysteries of your irrigation system. You can find information on [professional services](#) if you are looking for some assistance with your landscape. And if you need a little extra inspiration, there are suggested [places to visit](#), including xeriscape demonstration gardens in the AMWUA cities and around the region.

Now you are empowered with all the necessary information to ensure your yard is both stunning and sustainable. After all, with a bit of strategy and knowledge, it's easy to enjoy beauty and color in your desert yard all four seasons of the year while being responsible with the water we have. The final product will be worth it.

NEXT WEEK: Understanding how to water effectively and appropriately to reduce outdoor water use, even as the weather warms.

For over 50 years, the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association has helped protect our member cities' ability to provide their communities with assured, safe, and sustainable water supplies. For more information, visit www.amwua.org.