Water Wise Gardening

Is Drought Tolerant Landscaping

Why Consider WaterWise Gardening?

- The Big Country is semi arid. We are short grass prairie.
- We tend to get our rain in two big chunks.

Landscape irrigation accounts for about one-third of all residential water use; totaling nearly 9 billion.

Water Wise Gardening

- saves money,
- saves effort,
- saves the environment

So What are the Principles of Water Wise Landscaping?

- Choose the right plants
- Plan it out
- Prep your soil
- Est. practical turf areas
- Water efficiently
- Use mulch
- Maintain it

The Right Plants

- Don’t have to look this

The Right Plants are Key:
Choose Native and Adapted Plants

- **Native plants are those that grow in our region. They need less water and fertilizer. They also benefit native insects and birds.**
- **Adapted plants are those that grow in regions with similar climate.**

Examples of Natives

- Trees like oaks, pecans, and red bud
- Shrubs like Texas sage, dwarf yaupon, and coralberry
- Perennials like salvia greggii, Turks cap, purple cone flowers, coreopsis, mistflower

Examples of Adapted Plants

- Trees like vitex, crepe myrtle, and Afghan pine
- Shrubs: nandina, winter honeysuckle, fig, rosemary
- Perennials: lavender, meadow sage, bearded iris, dianthus, Russian sage

Avoid Invasives

Species that can out compete native plants

Sources for Finding Out More About Native and Adapted Plants

- Texas A&M Plant Selector
- Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center
- Native Plant Society of Texas
- And of course your local Master Gardeners

Books like:

- Howard Garrett's *Plants for Texas*
- *Landscaping With Native Plants of Texas* by George Oxford Miller
- *Native Texas Plants: Landscaping Region by Region* by Sally Wasowski

Planning and Design

- Evaluate what you have, want, and need.
- Think water: drainage, irrigation.
- Group plants with similar water needs.
- Will existing plants need to be moved or removed?
- Think about mature size of plants.
- Write it down to help you form an overall picture.

DON’T forget to check where the utility lines are located

Soil Prep

- Get a soil test to see if you have specific nutrient needs
- Is your soil sandy, loam, or clay?
- If you have sand or clay the fix is the same: add organic material (compost).

Remember: some native plants prefer leaner soils

Practical Turf Area

- How much grass do you want?
- How much grass do you need?
- What's the best type for your conditions?
- Lawns take more water than anything else in your landscape.

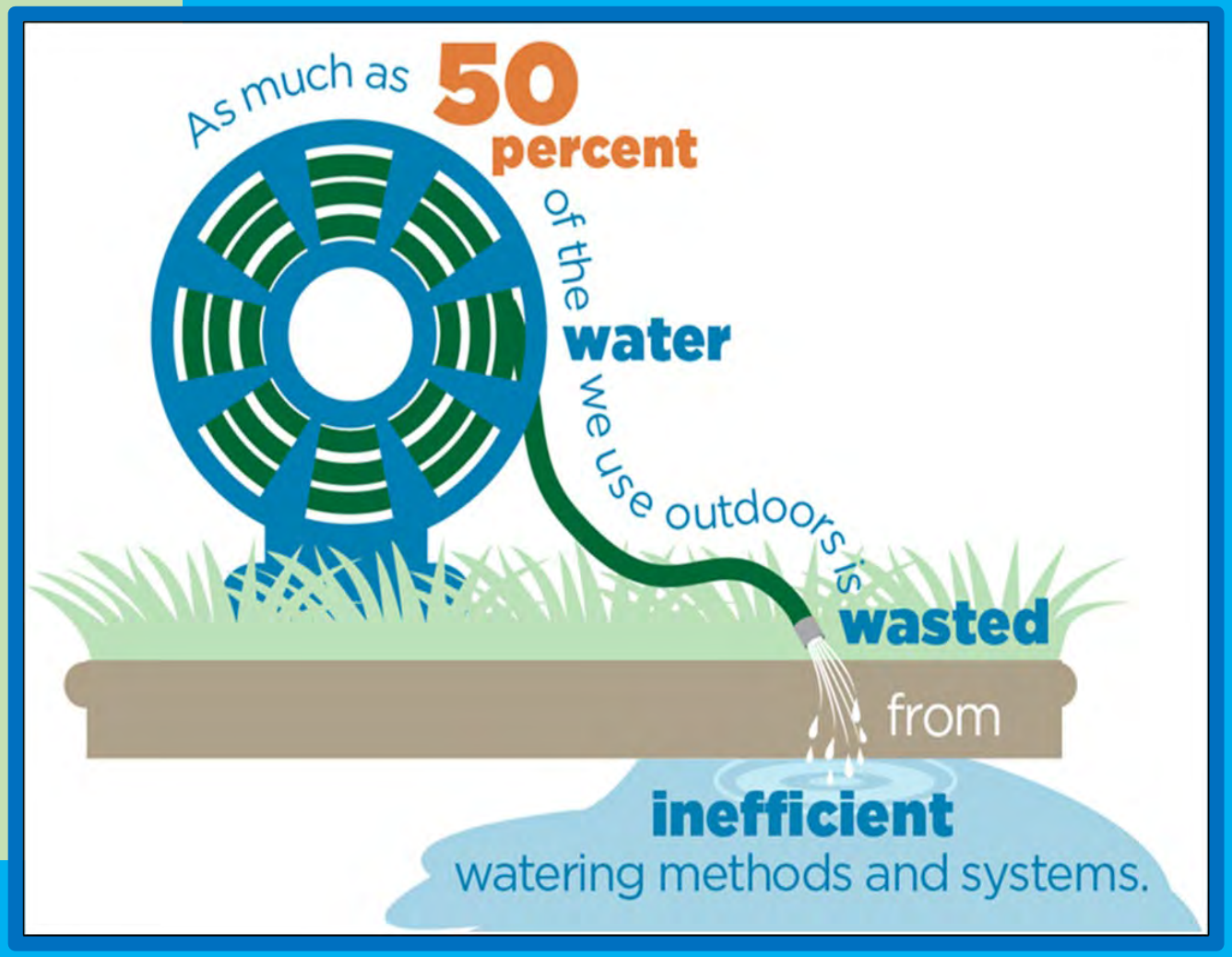
Lawns are the #1 irrigated crop in the US.
We use more water on our lawns than corn, wheat, and fruit orchards combined.

Try to Reduce Lawn

- Look for places where your lawn isn't thriving.
- Think about ground covers
- Expand existing flowerbeds
- Add some hardscaping

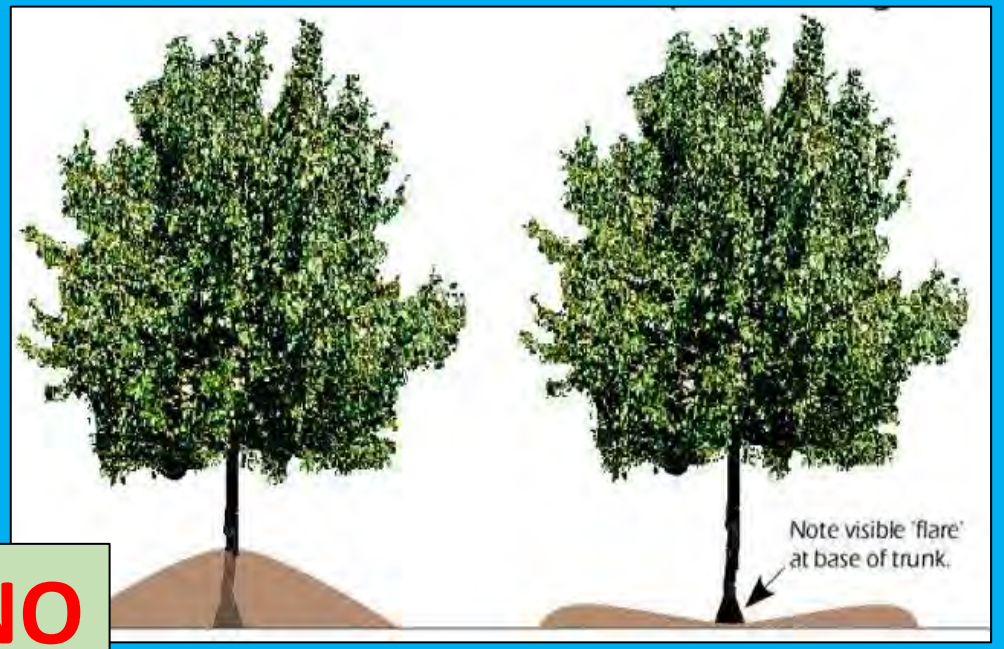
Water Efficiently

- Water in the coolest part of the day
- Maintain sprinkler systems
- Use soaker hoses and drip irrigation
- Timers can keep you from overwatering
- Don’t water the street.
- An inch a week is all you need.



Use Mulch

- Mulch conserves moisture, moderates soil temps, and helps control weeds
- Try “living mulch”, ground covers that grow under your plants
- Use 2 to 4 inches
- Make sure you don’t mound the mulch up around the base of plants, especially trees.



Volcano—NO

Donut -- YES

Appropriate Maintenance

- Mow regularly, but let your grass grow to the maximum recommended height.
- Mulch once a year
- Eliminate plants that don't do well
- Walk through your yard regularly, nip problems in the bud.

Grass Type	Suggested Mowing Height	Mow When Grass Reaches This Height
Bermuda	1" - 1½"	1½" - 2"
Centipede	1½" - 2"	2" - 3"
St. Augustine	3" - 3 ½"	3 ½" - 4"
Zoysia	1" - 1½"	1½" - 2"
Buffalo Grass	2"- 3"	2 ½ - 4

Waterwise Gardening

It will allow you to enjoy your garden with less work and give you more time to do other things.

Like spend it with your grandchildren.

Other Sources

- **Native American Seed**
- **Wildseed Farms**
- **Author Pam Penick has two books:**
  + *Lawn Gone*
  + *Water-Saving Garden*

Big Country Master Gardeners Fall Plant Sale -- October 15