

Steps to Creating a Water-wise or Edible Garden

Do you want to know how to turn your yard into an easy-care and water-wise garden? This exhibit shows you how to upgrade and save water in your unused lawn areas without compromising on beauty. Signs will guide you step by step with helpful tips for planning and implementing your project.

At home, most of our water is used for outdoor landscaping. By switching to a water-wise garden, together we can save millions of gallons of water. There is no better time than now to make a change in your high water-using lawn. It makes sense for you and for California.

Visit our website:

www.water.ca.gov/turf/statefair

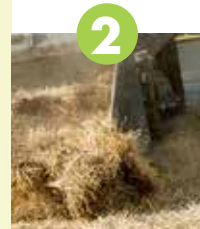
for more details on this exhibit and links to other helpful websites.



1

Plan your Project

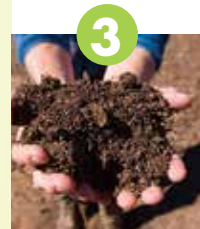
Before you start, take time to develop an overall concept. Draw a layout of your yard and mark areas of shade and high sun. This will help you plan for the types of plants you want and where to place them.



2

Remove Turf

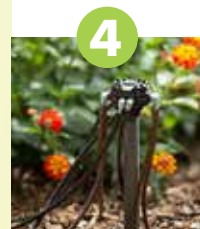
Options include sheet mulching, physical removal (digging or a rented sod cutter), solarization, or chemical. This part of the project can be very labor intensive. Sheet mulching is the recommended approach because it is less work, minimizes waste, and enriches the soil.



3

Amend Soil

Compost adds nutrients to your soil, jump-starts early growth, and helps your plants stay healthy. If your soil is compacted, try to dig the compost in. If you can't fully work the the compost in, leave it on top of the soil.



4

Irrigation

Either install a new water-efficient system or retrofit your existing one. There are several options for new systems. If retrofitting, some heads can be capped or modified to the dripline. Spray nozzles should be replaced with high efficiency nozzles. Plan your irrigation areas in zones to allow plants with similar water needs to be grouped together.



5

Permeable Hardscape

Setting pavers or flagstone in sand allows water to seep into the ground—which is a good thing! Edging like stones, brick or wood help define different parts of your garden.



6

Layout

Before digging holes, set your plants out to double check that they are spaced and grouped properly. Remember to account for how large the plants will become in a year or two. If you are using drip lines, lay these out in this step, too.



7

Mulch

A few inches of mulch helps keep soil cool, retains moisture, and keeps weeds away. It can also be used to add visual interest and color. Use large-textured mulch on slopes or where a leaf blower is used.

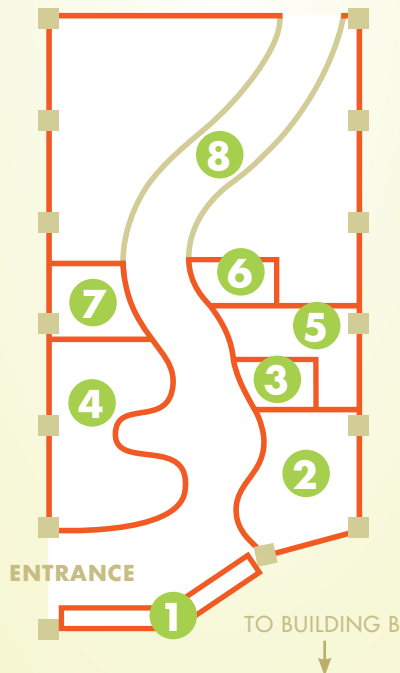


8

Finished Project

Congratulations! You have created an attractive, low-maintenance, and water-wise garden. Did it become an edible garden with fruit and vegetables for the family? Or perhaps you preferred the ease of succulents, the sway of ornamental grasses, or even a rain capture or butterfly garden? We hope we have helped you create the garden of your dreams that suits your California Lifestyle.

PERENNIAL FLOWER BEDS



BLACKSMITH
DEMO KIOSK

TRACTOR

Key Tips

- Pace yourself – don't try to do the project in one or two weekends (unless you have a tiny yard). It will take a series of weekends!
- If you aren't sure about removing all of your lawn, try a small area at first!
- The best time to plant is fall (October to November) or spring (March to April). Summer is a good time to plan your project for fall planting, visit nurseries to look at plants, and install irrigation and hardscape.
- Plan your garden to have various plants in bloom during different times of the year.
- Incorporate and merge ideas – have flowers in your edible garden and plants that tolerate wetter soils in your dry creekbed.
- Create seating and living areas in your yard.
- The first season, your plants will need extra water to get established.



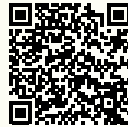
Resources

Come back to this exhibit anytime online! Please visit our website for more tips and resources for each of the steps in the exhibit. View photographs and get more information on all of the plants featured here.
www.water.ca.gov/turf/statefair

For information on turf rebates, go to:
www.saveourwaterrebates.com



REBATES



PRESENTED BY

California
Department of Water Resources

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Conservation
the California Lifestyle

CREATING Water-wise & Edible Gardens

A Step-by-step Guide