



Two types of irrigation systems can serve most of your needs:

- Sprinklers: water is sprinkled or sprayed through the air, landing on the targeted area. Sprinkler systems are typically used for lawn turf.
- Micro-irrigation systems apply small amounts of water either above or below the soil using precise water devices such as drip, bubblers, micro-sprinklers, micro-sprays or jets. This system is well suited for plants and bushes.

Knowing the source of your water supply is important because it may contain materials, such as salts, that can be detrimental to certain plants. There are generally two water sources in this area:

- Irrigation water is directly diverted or pumped from streams, wells, ponds or ditches and can carry high concentrations of salts, aquatic materials and suspended particles. If you decide to create a pond, properly line it so there is no seepage into the soil. Seepage increases salt and selenium loading to downstream water users. Have the water tested for anything that could be harmful to your plants.
- Domestic water is clean and available year-round. Pressure may vary during times of peak consumption.

Using a timer allows for watering each zone according to plant needs. The timer can be adjusted or turned off depending on weather. Be sure to regularly maintain the system and have the system tested annually by an irrigation specialist.

Detailed instructions on how to plan, design and install a water-wise yard is available in *A Guidebook for Installing Water-Saving Landscapes for Residential Homeowners*.

For soil testing, a list of plants compatible with your soil, or to find out where to get your water tested, hire a water auditor, or learn more about proper irrigating, contact your local CSU Cooperative Extension agent:

Mesa County.....(970) 244-1834
 Delta County.....(970) 874-2195
 Montrose County.....(970) 249-3935

Useful Websites:

Plant selection, xeriscape, gardening, turf, water management

www.xeriscape.org

www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/garden/07230.html

www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/garden/pubgard.html#basics

www.ext.colostate.edu/psel/index.html

www.ext.colostate.edu/ptlk/index.html

Irrigation systems, irrigation design, do it yourself:

www.irrigation.org

www.irrigationtutorials.com

Soils and water-related information:

<http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/soil/sps.htm>

Weather and Drought

<http://drought.colostate.edu>

<http://www.thedripwebsite.com>

www.thedripwebsite.com

Go to CSU's AnswerLink with questions about soils, plants and water-saving information:

<http://ext-colostate.custhelp.com>



Wise Water Use for Residential Landscapes

A basic guide for creating a beautiful landscape while saving Western Colorado's most precious resource.



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Water: Everyone's Responsibility

There's no wonder that Western Colorado is one of the fastest growing areas in the state. We are surrounded by diverse geography from cactus-ridden valley floors, to 14,000 foot snow-capped mountains, to spiraling red sandstone towers and canyon amphitheatres. As varied as these places are, most are part of a bigger climate zone that significantly impacts our region: the high desert.

By nature, Western Colorado is vulnerable to cycles of drought. As more people move into the area—especially the valley floors that receive less than ten inches of rain per year—we need to take extra steps to ensure that we preserve enough water for tomorrow's needs while also protecting the quality of our water.

As a homeowner in a high-desert area, you influence water quality by practicing conservation. Your efforts prevent selenium, a naturally occurring trace element that is potentially harmful to wildlife, from entering streams and rivers. That's just one of the critical reasons to practice wise water use. For more information on selenium, go to www.seleniumtaskforce.org.



The Right Design

Whether you're just beginning to landscape or want to rework your existing yard, the key to a comfortable and water-wise setting is to determine the needs of your household. They may include:

- A grassy play area for children or pets
- A south-facing garden with some shade
- A patio, barbecue pit or deck for entertaining
- Trees for shade and/or privacy
- Space for a hot tub or gazebo
- "Natural" areas for wildlife

For ideas, consider visiting a xeriscape demonstration site located at the Mesa County Fairgrounds, the Montrose Botanical Society Garden, or the Olathe Community Park. Then, draw a simple map of what you want. As you plan, keep these things in mind:

- Group together the plants, shrubs, turf and trees that require similar watering needs.
- Plant what will thrive in specific climate zones only.
- Take soil samples into your local Cooperative Extension office or to a certified soils lab to determine which plants will grow best in your soil.
- Educate yourself about xeriscaping and the types of plants and grasses that are drought-resistant. See the web links on the back of this brochure for ideas.
- Consider complementing living plants with decorative rocks, boulders, wood chips and mulch.



How often and how much watering is necessary is determined by:

- Soils: there are three types of soils in the region: sandy, loamy and clay. Each type of soil requires different watering frequencies and amounts.
- Types of plants and grasses: Learn about the water requirements for each plant or tree before purchasing. You will save money by investing only in those plants that will do well in your soil and in particular locations in your yard.
- Weather: Heat, humidity and moisture all contribute to how much water your plants will need. Be aware of when you need to water more or less, and adapt with changes in the weather.



Choosing and Installing an Irrigation System

Design your yard so plants with similar watering needs are grouped together. By doing that, you can determine how often and how much water is necessary. Likewise, the amount of water necessary will establish the type of irrigation system you should use. The source of your water will influence the types of irrigation systems available to you and the quality of the water being applied to your plants.