

Principles of WaterWise Gardening

- 1. Planning and Design:** Measure and evaluate your space in terms of drainage, sunlight, wind and frost patterns, fixed objects, etc.
- 2. Soil Analysis and Improvements:** A soil test will help you understand the tilth and fertility of your soil. In most cases, organic matter (compost) should be added.
- 3. Practical Turf Areas:** You can have your grass and enjoy it, too– but less lawn means less water and maintenance.
- 4. Appropriate Plant Selection:** It's time to be choosy. Poorly adapted plants are a pain.
- 5. Efficient Irrigation:** Old habits, like “a sprinkle a day”, die hard. Train yourself to water deeply and less frequently. Consider drip irrigation for efficient water use.
- 6. Mulching:** Do the right thing. Mulch reduces water evaporation and weed competition. It acts as a thermal blanket to moderate soil temperature, and slows the spread of soil-borne diseases.
- 7. Appropriate Maintenance:** Make it easy on yourself. Choosing the right plant for the right place and following good cultural practices will save time and money.

These principles are interrelated and interdependent. The maximum benefit of reduced water consumption is realized when all these principles are achieved.

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

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To ask a gardening question,
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Monday-Friday: 9:00 am – 3:30 pm

Dallas County Master Gardeners are trained volunteers supporting Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Dallas County Horticulture programming.
www.dallascountymastergardeners.org

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TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

HERBS IN THE WATER WISE GARDEN



Dallas County Master Gardener

Here's a Surprise:

Almost any herb can be included in a WaterWise garden if it is adapted to the region in terms of climate and soil type. Try to group plants with similar cultural needs, so that water can be used efficiently. Even relatively "thirsty" herbs can be grown in a small oasis area that receives more frequent irrigation, so you can have your basil and eat it, too!

Characteristics of Water-Wise herbs:

Selecting drought tolerant herbs may seem difficult, but there are general characteristics common to many WaterWise herbs:

- Plants with gray, silver, or fuzzy leaves are often drought resistant. The tiny hairs or coating on the leaves actually retard moisture loss.
- Herbs with very tiny leaves, needle-like foliage or finely divided foliage have a smaller leaf surface to lose water.
- Herbs from certain regions, such as the Mediterranean, the American Southwest, parts of China, Australia or Mexico are often successful in dry soils.
- Plants with succulent leaves or stems, or deep taproots will conserve moisture.

Strongly aromatic herbs may be drought resistant, since the essential oils may reduce moisture loss.

Herbs that are native to your particular region or ecosystem have evolved to thrive on natural rainfall. Additionally, they are often more pest and disease resistant, and can withstand record cold and drought periods. Native herbs frequently provide food and shelter for wildlife.

Selecting Herbs:

Many familiar culinary or fragrant herbs are good candidates for WaterWise gardens.

Lavender
Marjoram
Mexican Mint Marigold
Oregano
Rosemary
Sage
Thyme
Winter Savory

Other herbs that may not be as well known, or may have uses for medicine, dyes or fibers, cosmetics, or economic and industrial purposes, can thrive in dry soils.

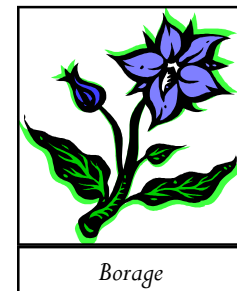
Anise Hyssop
Butterfly Weed
Catnip, Catmint
Feverfew
Germander
Horehound
Hyssop
Lamb's Ear
Purple Coneflower
Rue
Santolina
Scented Pelargoniums
Southernwood
Vitex
Wormwood
Yarrow
(and many others)

All newly planted herbs will need adequate water to become established.

Growing Herbs:

Herbs are living links to our past and to people around the world. These useful plants are quite varied in their cultural needs, growth forms and life cycles. Many herbs have evolved in climates with low rainfall and high temperatures, and will do well in North Texas as long as they have good drainage. Savvy gardeners will incorporate organic matter and expanded clay shale into their soil to improve poor drainage. Creating raised beds for planting is another technique for managing heavy clay soils.

Herbs do not have to be grown separately in "herb gardens." The tremendous variety of foliage texture, shape, color and fragrance can add interest to perennial beds, native plantings, shrub and rose beds or vegetable gardens.



Make Every Drop Count!

Texans have become acutely aware of water issues: community restrictions, water quality and quantity, conservation and future growth, and cost concerns. Unfortunately, many Texans don't know how to begin to address these issues on a personal level — in their own back yards. Water is a precious and fragile resource, and a significant percentage of our state's water consumption is spent on our landscapes. It's up to each of us to learn to do more with less.