Establishing **Waterwise Plants**

Abbotsford Mission
Water & Sewer Services

www.ourwatermatters.ca

Establishing Waterwise Plants

Why Create a Waterwise Landscape?

- Often, the design and operation of our landscapes is not well-planned, which can lead to wasteful water use.
- Planning, preparing, and maintaining your landscape properly will result in a healthier use of water, with better performance, less pests and disease, and hardier plants overall.
- Better landscaping techniques can reduce fertilizer, pesticide use, and the need for maintenance.
- Using less water saves money.
- Higher water consumption increases the demand for costly infrastructure. Water savings allow the deferral of infrastructure investments.
- Reduced water use leaves more water in lakes, aquifers and streams to support our ecosystems.

How to get started

The success of a drought-tolerant garden is dependent upon its successful establishment. The first few years after planting are the most critical, after which the water wise garden should be resilient enough to withstand extended periods without supplemental irrigation during the hot summer months. Drought tolerant plants still need to be watered periodically, but following the recommendations will help to ensure your garden thrives with minimal care and maintenance for years to come.

DID YOU KNOW

LANDSCAPE & IRRIGATION PROGRAM

The Landscape and Irrigation Program offers free irrigation and landscape assessments to Abbotsford and Mission residents. During this session, you will learn how to make your landscape more water efficient, how to amend your soil and get recommendations for irrigation systems. To apply, or find out more, visit ourwatermatters.ca.

Check out the Fraser Valley Conservancy's Gardening with Native Plants in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley. https://fraservalleyconservancy.ca/gardening-guide/

Plant in the Fall

This is the easiest thing you can do to give your plants the best start possible. Autumn's cooler temperatures and increased rainfall make it the perfect time to plant. The milder climate and abundant water supply act as a buffer against the shock of being transplanted. Perennials, shrubs, and trees will continue to slowly grow until the winter, when most plants will go dormant. When spring arrives, plants will already be well-established and ready to take on unpredictable spring weather and summer droughts.

Amend the Soil

One of the most important things you can do for your plants is to improve the soil's nutrient content and water-holding capacity through the addition of compost. Adding organic matter improves the texture and quality of soil, and plants love it! When planting, replace one-third of the removed soil from the planting hole and replace with compost to add vital nutrients that assist with root growth and establishment. After planting, it is a good idea to spread compost around the base of the plant in a thin layer several times a year to gradually work its way into the soil. Using compost eliminates the need for synthetic fertilizers, which is much better for the environment and will save you money!

Add Organic Mulch

Mulching around the base of your plants helps to reduce water loss by evaporation, acts as a weed suppressant, and as an insulator during the cold winter months. Mulch should be applied in a one to two inch layer – any thicker may suffocate your plant's roots. Also, be sure not to mound mulch around the base of the plant, as this could rot the stem. Different materials can be used as mulch – try straw, grass clippings, bark mulch or even cardboard depending on the location of the plant and the look you are "seeking to achieve."

Adding mulch to your garden is likely the single most effective way to reduce a garden's water needs and reduce weeds!

Water Smart

Using a hand held spring-loaded nozzle and concentrating the flow of water onto the root zone is one of the most effective ways to hand water. Avoid wetting foliage. Water depending on the plant type and how long the plant has been established. For newly established plants, water deeply and frequently the first summer. For subsequent summers, a deep watering once or twice a week is usually sufficient. Deeply watering encourages plant's roots to grow further into the soil where water is more readily available during the hot summer months. There are more efficient ways to water, too – consider installing drip irrigation or ollas (in-ground clay vessels that hold and slowly release water into the surrounding soil), or using rain barrels and cisterns for storage. These methods can help you store and distribute water wisely, leaving you more time to enjoy your garden.

Planting Suggestions

The following plants have been selected for their excellent drought tolerance. As an added benefit, most of these selections are native to BC, meaning they are also adapted to seasonal fluctuation in water availability typical of the Fraser Valley. By planting a community of drought-tolerant native plants, you are helping to strengthen natural ecosystem linkages throughout our region and supporting our native pollinator and bird populations while conserving water, our most valuable natural resource.

QUICK Fact

Annuals need more water and nutrients than perennials. Perennials are plants that will come back every year. Look for plants that reduce or eliminate the need for additional irrigation.

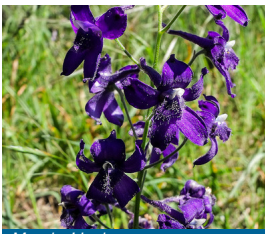
Perennials

*Rose Campion (Silene coronaria)**

Woolly Sunflower (Eriophyllum lanatum)

Oregon Stonecrop (Sedum oreganum)

Pearly Everlasting (Anaphalis margaritacea)

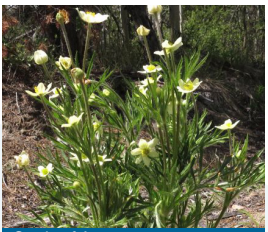


Menzies' Larkspur (Delphinium menziesii)

Thrift (Armeria maritima)

Yarrow (Achillea millefolium cvs.)

Lupine (Lupinus polyphyllus)



Cut-Leaf Anemone (Anemone multifida)

Camas (Camassia quamash)

Hyssop (Agastache foeniculum)

Pussytoes (Antennaria dioica)

**Non-native, but non-invasive and well-adapted to dry soils in the Pacific Northwest.*

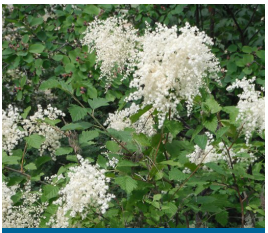
Shrubs

Salal (Gaultheria shallon)

Saskatoon Berry (Amelanchier alnifolia)

Common Juniper (Juniperus communis)

Evergreen Huckleberry (Vaccinium ovatum 'Thunderbird')



Oceanspray (Holodiscus discolour)

Red Flowering Currant (Ribes sanguineum)

Oregon Grape (Mahonia aquifolium)

Blue Elderberry (Sambucus cerulea)

Lewis Mock Orange (Philadelphus lewisii)

Pacific Rhododendron (Rhododendron macrophyllum)

*Sea Buckthorn (Hippophae rhamnoides)**

*Strawberry Tree (Arbutus unedo)**

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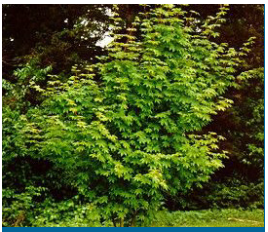
Trees

Douglas Maple (Acer glabrum)

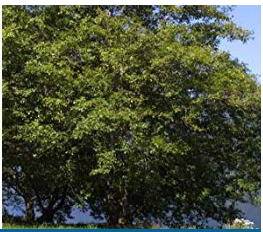


Vine Maple (Acer circinatum)

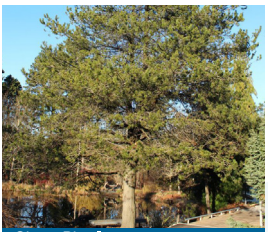
Staghorn Sumac (Rhus typhina)

Sitka Mountain Ash (Sorbus sitchensis)

Bitter Cherry (Prunus emarginata)



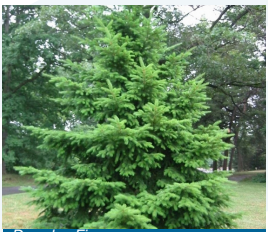
Red Alder (Alnus rubra)



*Shore Pine * (Pinus contorta var. contorta)*

Black Hawthorn (Crataegus douglasii)

Washington Hawthorn (Crataegus phaenopyrum)



Douglas Fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii)

Chokecherry (Prunus virginiana)

Pacific Crabapple (Malus fusca)

Photo Credit: KPU database

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Fraser Valley Conservancy
Placing lands in trust for our future

For more native and waterwise plant choices, check out the **growgreenguide.ca** and **fraservalleyconservancy.ca**

our water matters

For more information on water conservation visit ourwatermatters.ca

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