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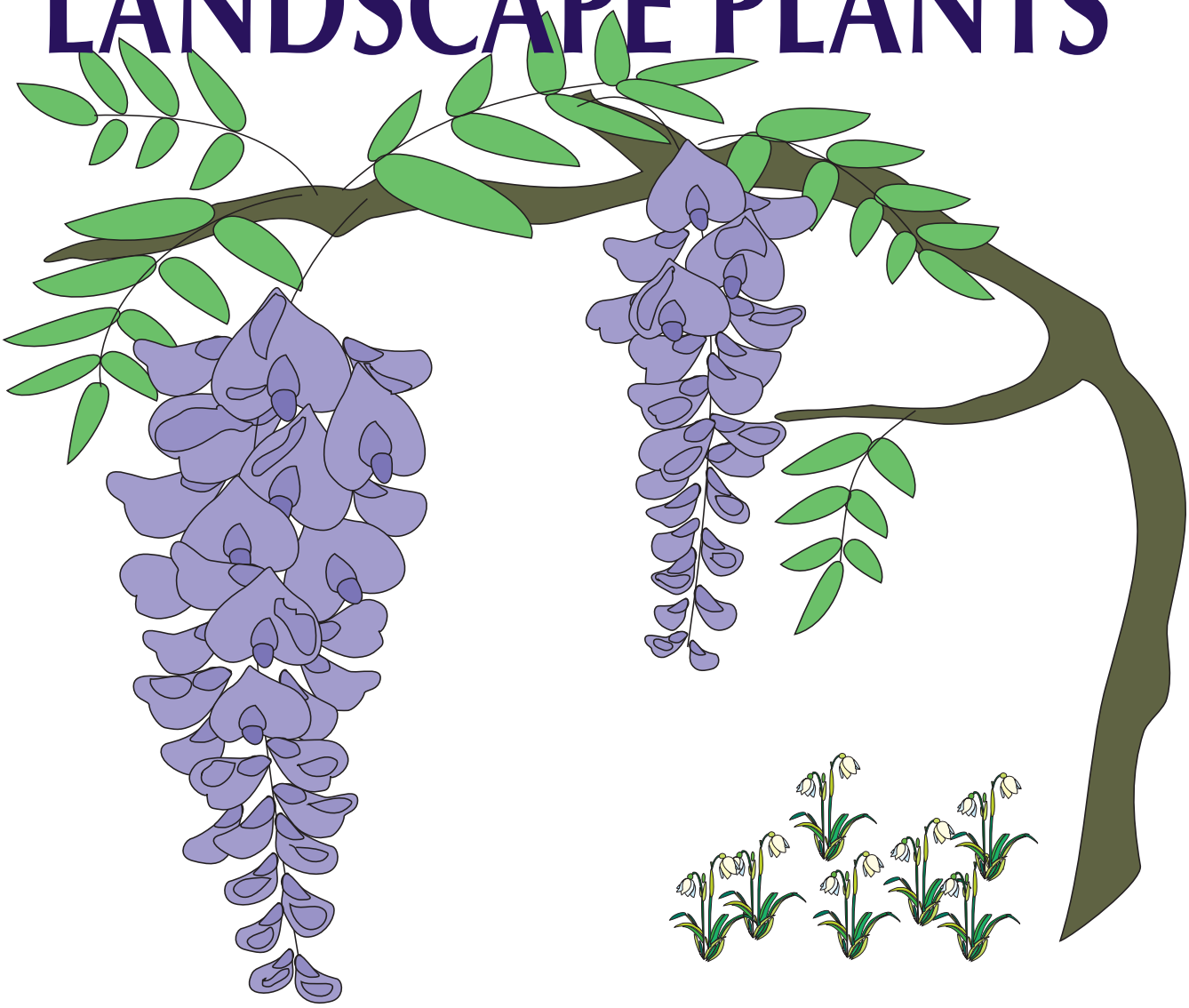
WATER-EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE PLANTS



Oregon State University | Extension Service

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Plant lists

This is a preview of a 34-page publication, available from the Oregon State University Extension Service for $5.50 plus shipping and handling.

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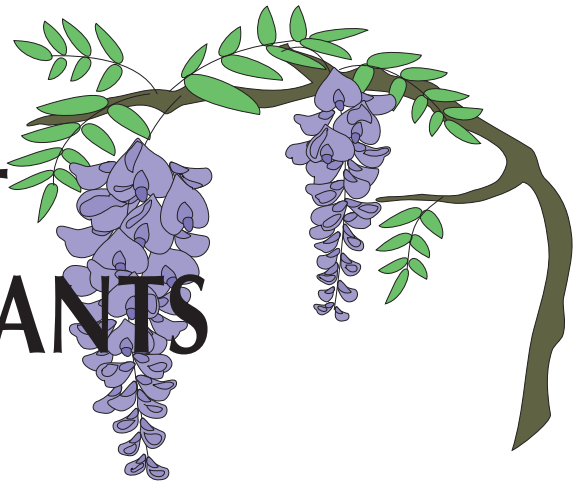
WATER-EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE PLANTS



This publication will help you select plant materials for landscaping. It contains more than 370 water-efficient landscape plants for the Pacific Northwest.

The best advice in plant selection is to find the right plant for the right place. Consider all of the factors that make up the environment in your yard—minimum and maximum temperatures, frost occurrence, seasonal rainfall distribution, humidity, soil characteristics, water availability, wind, and duration and intensity of sunlight. Every plant tolerates a range of conditions for each of these factors. The combined effects of all of them determine plant adaptability. Consult plant nurseries, Master Gardeners, or reference books to determine which plants will grow well in your specific environment.

PLANNING A WATER-EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE

Besides selecting water-efficient plants, there are several things you can do to reduce the amount of water needed in your landscape. Many of these suggestions are based on the concept of "xeriscaping," a term coined in the 1980s to describe water-efficient landscaping. Key steps to establishing a successful water-efficient landscape include:

- Starting with a landscape plan
- Improving your soil
- Selecting appropriate plants
- Getting your plants off to a good start
- Watering wisely
- Mulching
- Taking care of your plants

Neil Bell, community horticulturist, Marion and Polk counties; Ann Marie VanderZanden, former Master Gardener state coordinator; and Linda McMahan, community horticulturist, Yamhill County; Oregon State University.

Research has shown that these water-saving guidelines can reduce landscape water use by 60 to 80 percent. Details on these topics are available in the following OSU Extension Service publications:

- *Basic Design Concepts for Sustainable Landscapes,* EC 1533
- *Conserving Water in the Garden: Designing and Installing a New Landscape,* EC 1530
- *Conserving Water in the Garden: Landscape and Lawn Care,* EC 1531
- *Plant Selection for Sustainable Landscapes,* EC 1534

See page 3 for ordering instructions for these and other related publications.

ESTABLISHING YOUR LANDSCAPE

Proper soil preparation prior to planting can have a major impact on subsequent water use and plant performance. Proper soil preparation, in fact, can significantly expand the range of plants that can be grown in a water-efficient way in our area.

Watch for warning signs of very poor soil. Is your soil dry and cracked in summer? Is it difficult to dig in the soil, whether wet or dry? Does water pool on the surface and drain slowly, or run off without seeping in? All of these conditions indicate that the soil is low in organic matter.

Low organic matter and compaction are two soil-quality challenges that often occur together. Root growth usually is restricted in such soils. Plants, even water-efficient plants, cannot obtain sufficient water and nutrients without difficulty.

Adding organic matter to the soil prior to planting can make your soil a better environment for any kind of plant. Composted leaves, yard waste, and mint hay are examples of organic amendments that are readily available to home gardeners at reasonable cost. The addition of 3 to 4 inches of mulch following planting also will substantially reduce water requirements. See EC 1561, *Improving Garden Soils with Organic Matter.*

Keep in mind that even water-efficient plants require regular water during their first year. This requirement can be reduced by planting in the early fall, thus giving the root system time to get established during mild, wet winter weather. If you plant in the spring, try to plant as early as the weather allows, between mid-February and mid-April. By July, the plants' root systems will be better established and able to take up more water.

Understanding plant names

The Latin binomial system or botanical name is the preferred method of referring to plants. Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus developed this system of plant classification in the 1700s. The first word of the name is the genus (e.g., *Acer*), and the second is the specific epithet (e.g., *rubrum*). The specific epithet often is mistakenly referred to as the species; in reality, species refers to a group of plants within the same genus.

Many ornamental plants also are referred to using a cultivar name in addition to the Latin binomial (e.g., *Acer rubrum* 'October Glory' or *Acer rubrum* cv. October Glory). A cultivar is a cultivated variety that has unique characteristics that differ from the species. To come true to type, many cultivars need to be propagated vegetatively (by cuttings, grafting, or division).

Using the common name to refer to a plant often is confusing because many plants do not have a common name, or they share a common name with others. To further complicate the situation, the same common name may be used in different regions to describe different plants. Additionally, one plant might have several common names.

Plant hardiness zones

Plant hardiness zones depict minimum winter temperatures. (See map below.) A plant species that flourishes in one part of a given zone is likely to be adaptable in other parts of the same zone or in a warmer zone. The zones given in this publication indicate the minimum zone where a plant is expected to be hardy. If multiple species are available, hardiness might vary among them.

Some gardeners question a zone rating when a plant fails to survive its first winter. A single test, however, rarely is reliable. A small, young plant may be tender, but may become quite hardy as it grows older. Other conditions also may affect the degree of hardiness. Furthermore, no single winter is quite average; some are more severe than others in suddenness of freezing or in severity of frost.

Oregon plant hardiness zone map. (Extracted from the USDA's national plant hardiness zone map, based on average annual minimum temperature in °F.)

Zone 4 = -30 to -20
Zone 5 = -20 to -10
Zone 6 = -10 to 0
Zone 7 = 0 to 10
Zone 8 = 10 to 20
Zone 9 = 20 to 30

ANNUALS

Eschscholzia californica
(California poppy)

Botanical name	Common name	Hardiness	Height	Width	Flowering	Remarks
Abutilon hybrids*	Flowering maple	H	2–3'	2–3'	Spring–summer (white, yellow, pink, red)	Maple-like leaves, drooping, bell-like flowers.
Arctotis species*	African daisy	H	18"	18"	Summer–fall (many colors)	Many seed-grown varieties.
Argemone mexicana	Prickly poppy	T	2'	18"	Summer–fall (yellow)	Prickly, blue leaves on long-blooming plants.
Argyranthemum frutescens	Marguerite daisy	H	4'	4'	Summer	Big, white daisy flowers.
*Brachycome iberidifolia**	Swan River daisy	HH	8–18"	18"	Summer (blue, violet, white)	Finely divided leaves; flowers are faintly fragrant.
Calandrinia umbellata	Rock purslane	HH	6"	—	Summer (pink)	—
*Calendula officinalis**	Pot marigold	HH	2'	2'	Summer (orange, yellow)	Will bloom any time of the year; often overwinters.
Catharanthus roseus	Rose periwinkle	T	10–14"	—	Summer–fall (pink, red, white)	Not for coastal gardens; best in a warm site.
*Celosia cristata**	Cockscomb	HH	10–24"**	—	Summer–fall (red, yellow, orange, pink, cream)	Taller varieties can be used for cutting.
*Cleome hasslerana**	Spider flower	HH	3–4'**	12–18"**	Summer–fall (white, violet, pink)	Performs best in rich, well-amended soil.
*Cosmos bipinnatus**	Garden cosmos	T	1–4'**	8–18"**	Summer–fall (many colors)	Excellent foliage effect; good cut flower.

Unless otherwise indicated, all of the listed plants prefer full sun.
Hardiness: T=tender annual (does not tolerate frost); HH=half-hardy annual (tolerates light frost); H=hardy annual (tolerates heavy frost, might overwinter)
**Multiple cultivars available.*
***Size depends on cultivar.*

Botanical name	Common name	Hardiness	Height	Width	Flowering	Remarks
Dimorphotheca species*	African daisy	T	2'	2'	Summer–fall (white, yellow)	Seed-grown selections available.
Dorotheanthus bellidiformis	Livingstone daisy	T	3"	12"	Summer (pink)	Fleshy, bright green leaves; flowers attract bees.
Echium vulgare		H	2–3'	1'	Summer (blue, white, pink)	Best with good drainage; spectacular spikes of flowers.
Eschscholzia californica	California poppy	H	6"–1'	6"–1'	Summer–fall (orange, white)	Will often overwinter; self-sows readily.
Felicia species*	Blue marguerite	H	6–14"	1–3'	Summer (blue)	Foliage is quite aromatic.
*Gaillardia pulchella**	Blanketflower	H	18–20"	—	Summer–fall (red, yellow)	Pubescent, greenish-gray foliage.
*Gazania x hybrida**	Gazania	H	6–12"**	6–10"**	Summer–fall (cream, yellow, pink, orange, red)	Will often overwinter; foliage may be green with silvery gray on underside.
Gilia capitata	Blue thimble flower	T	8–30"	8"	Summer (blue)	Flower spikes look like pincushions; native to West Coast.
Gilia tricolor	Bird's eyes	T	10–20"	8"	Summer (violet)	—
Glaucium flavum	Sea poppy	H	2'	18"	Summer (yellow, orange)	Gray-green foliage.
Gomphrena species*	Globe amaranth	T	8–24"**	10-12"**	Summer (white, lavender, rose)	Good for cutting, drying.
*Helianthus annuus**	Common sunflower	HH	2–10'**	—	Summer–fall (yellow, red)	Huge range of cultivars; great for kids and wildlife.
*Helichrysum bracteatum**	Strawflower	HH	1–3'**	—	Summer–fall (red, orange, yellow, white)	Good for cutting, drying; pick flowers before bracts open.
Hunnemannia fumariifolia	Mexican tulip poppy	H	2'	2'	Summer (yellow)	Needs good drainage.
*Lavatera trimestris**	Lavatera	H	21–48"**	—	Summer (many)	Good cut flower, similar to hollyhock; self-sows readily.

Annuals

Botanical name	Common name	Hardiness	Height	Width	Flowering	Remarks
*Limonium sinuatum**	Statice	HH	18"	1'	Summer (many)	Mediterranean native, good as a cut flower both fresh and dried.
Lisianthus species* (may be seen as *Eustoma grandiflorum*)	Texas bluebell	HH	8–40"**	6–12"	Summer (blue, red, pink, white)	Good cut flower.
Mesembryanthemum species*	Ice plant	T	6"	9"	Summer (many)	Oval, fleshy leaves have small blisters that resemble ice.
*Papaver rhoeas**	Shirley poppy	H	12–36"**	—	Summer (pink, white, red)	May be used as cut flower; will self-sow.
Portulaca species*	Moss rose	T	6–10"**	6–12"**	Summer (white, orange, yellow, pink)	Prefers a hot, sunny site.
Ricinus communis	Castor bean	HH	12'	5'	Summer (white)	Seeds are poisonous, avoid contact with foliage; do not plant if children present.
*Salvia farinacea**	Texas violet	HH	1–2'**	1–2'**	Summer–fall (blue, white)	Many cultivars; good as cut or dried flower.
*Salvia splendens**	Scarlet sage	HH	10–30"**	—	Summer–fall (red, purple, white)	—
*Sanvitalia procumbens**	Creeping zinnia	HH	6"	12"	Summer–fall (yellow)	Trailing habit is good for containers.
*Senecio cineraria**	Dusty miller	H	12–18"	—	Summer (yellow)	Grown for silvery foliage.
*Tropaeolum majus**	Nasturtium	HH	18"–4'	18"	Summer (many)	Both climbing and bush types exist, many selected forms and colors.
*Verbena x hybrida**	Garden verbena	T	10"–3'**	6–18"**	Summer (many)	Flowers are fragrant.
Zinnia grandiflora	Rocky Mountain zinnia	H	12"	12"	Summer (yellow)	Blooms better with some supplemental water.

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