



THE FIELD ALMANAC · FREE GUIDE

The Xeriscaping Quick- Start Guide

Everything you need to plan a beautiful
yard that thrives on a fraction of the
water.

[Xeriscaping.com](https://www.xeriscaping.com)

Beautiful landscapes, less water.

THE METHOD

10 Steps to a Xeriscape

Follow these in order and you'll skip the expensive mistakes most first-timers make.

1 Set goals & budget

Decide what you want — lower bills, less mowing, more color — and check your water utility for a lawn-removal rebate before you start.

2 Map your site

Note sun, shade, slope, and where water pools or runs off. You're hunting for microclimates.

3 Learn your hardiness zone

Look up your USDA zone by ZIP. It tells you what survives your winter — before you spend a dollar.

4 Design in hydrozones

Group plants by water need so one drip line never drowns one plant to keep another alive.

5 Rethink your turf

Keep lawn only where you'll walk or play. Replace the rest, or switch to a low-water grass.

6 Improve the soil

Work 2–3 inches of compost into beds (skip this for lean-soil natives).

7 Choose the right plants

Native and climate-adapted species matched to your zone and each microclimate. (See the list →)

8 Install efficient irrigation

Drip delivers water to the roots at nearly 100% efficiency. Add a smart controller or rain sensor.

9 Mulch everything

2–3 inches: wood in planted beds, gravel in the driest zones. Locks in moisture, blocks weeds.

10 Water to establish, then wean

Water deeply the first season while roots dive deep — then taper hard. Deep roots are the whole game.

RIGHT PLANT, RIGHT PLACE

20 Can't-Miss Low-Water Plants

A starter palette of proven performers — every one drought-tolerant once established. Match the zone range to yours, then mix heights, colors, and bloom times.

PLANT	BOTANICAL NAME	TYPE	ZONES	WATER	BLOOM
Catmint	<i>Nepeta × faassenii</i>	Perennial	4–8	Low	purple, blue
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Perennial	3–9	Very low	yellow, red
Salvia 'May Night'	<i>Salvia nemorosa</i>	Perennial	4–8	Low	purple
Rocky Mountain Penstemon	<i>Penstemon strictus</i>	Perennial	4–9	Very low	blue, purple
Hummingbird Mint	<i>Agastache rupestris</i>	Perennial	5–9	Very low	orange, pink
Blanket Flower	<i>Gaillardia aristata</i>	Perennial	3–9	Very low	red, orange
Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Perennial	3–9	Low	purple, pink
Russian Sage	<i>Salvia yangii</i>	Perennial	4–9	Very low	purple, silver
English Lavender	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Perennial	5–9	Low	purple
Hardy Ice Plant	<i>Delosperma cooperi</i>	Groundcover	4–9	Very low	pink, purple

RIGHT PLANT, RIGHT PLACE

The plant list, continued

Ten more — grasses, shrubs, a tree, and tough succulents to give the planting structure and four-season interest.

PLANT	BOTANICAL NAME	TYPE	ZONES	WATER	BLOOM
Blue Grama	<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	Grass	3–10	Very low	yellow
Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Grass	3–9	Very low	blue, red
Karl Foerster Feather Reed Grass	<i>Calamagrostis × acutiflora</i>	Grass	4–9	Low	yellow
Rabbitbrush	<i>Ericameria nauseosa</i>	Shrub	4–9	Very low	yellow, silver
Apache Plume	<i>Fallugia paradoxa</i>	Shrub	4–9	Very low	white, pink
Desert Willow	<i>Chilopsis linearis</i>	Tree	7–10	Low	pink, purple
Red Yucca	<i>Hesperaloe parviflora</i>	Succulent	5–10	Very low	red, pink
Claret Cup Cactus	<i>Echinocereus triglochidiatus</i>	Cactus	5–9	Very low	red, orange
Hens-and-Chicks	<i>Sempervivum tectorum</i>	Succulent	3–8	Very low	green, red
Sedum 'Autumn Joy'	<i>Hylotelephium spectabile</i>	Succulent	3–9	Very low	pink

KNOW YOUR NUMBER

USDA Hardiness Zone Quick Reference

Your zone is the average coldest winter night where you live — the single most useful number for choosing plants that survive. Look yours up by ZIP at app.xeriscaping.com/zone.

ZONE	AVG. WINTER LOW	FEELS LIKE
Zone 3	–40 to –30°F	N. Minnesota, high Rockies
Zone 4	–30 to –20°F	Minneapolis, Cheyenne
Zone 5	–20 to –10°F	Denver, Des Moines, Salt Lake benches
Zone 6	–10 to 0°F	Boise, Kansas City, mid-Utah
Zone 7	0 to 10°F	Albuquerque, Oklahoma City, Reno
Zone 8	10 to 20°F	Austin, Dallas, Seattle
Zone 9	20 to 30°F	San Antonio, Phoenix, Houston
Zone 10	30 to 40°F	San Diego, Las Vegas, Los Angeles

Hardiness tells you what survives *winter*. Pair it with your local rainfall to know what survives *summer* without a hose — that's the whole idea behind xeriscaping.

KEEP GOING

Your next steps

You've got the method and a plant list. Here's where to go deeper — all free.

Read the guides

60+ plain-English guides on plants, design, cost, rebates, and your specific city.

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