WATER CONSERVATION

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What is Xeriscaping?
The word "xeriscape" is derived from the Greek "xeros," meaning dry, and "scape," a kind of view or scene. Xeriscaping is landscaping that conserves water and protects the environment by matching the right plants with existing site conditions to minimize the need for watering.

Here in Florida, using mostly native draught resistant plants, your yard can look beautiful for less money. Homeowners who adopt xeriscape techniques can reduce their water consumption by 25–75 percent, and it doesn’t require any additional work, just careful planning.

Xeriscaping divides your yard into zones.

1. **Oasis Zone**
   Near your house. Contains plants that require frequent watering and maintenance. This should be the smallest zone in the landscaping plan. You may want to consider plants in pots instead of flower beds in this part of the yard.

2. **Drought Tolerant Zone**
   Contains the plants that only need to be watered when there has been no rain for 7–10 days.

3. **Natural Zone**
   Farthest from the house and will contain those plants that thrive with no rainfall.

### Watering a Florida Lawn

In addition to choosing Florida-friendly plants for your landscape, OUC also recommends these irrigation tips to keep your water bills low and your yard beautiful and healthy:

- **Do not over-water plants.** Over-watering not only wastes water, but it promotes shallow root growth and makes your lawn more susceptible to insects and disease.
- **Water only before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.** to minimize the amount lost to evaporation.
- **Water just once a week in the cooler months and twice a week in the warmer months.** Water for just 30–45 minutes a session (½ inch to ¾ inch of water per zone).
- **Turn off sprinklers when it’s raining or install a rain shut-off device.**
- **Avoid watering on windy days.**
- **Avoid sprinklers that spray a fine mist,** which increases evaporation.
- **Make sure plants are not blocking sprinklers.**
- **Irrigation systems should be zoned so plants with different water needs are irrigated separately (grass, for example, should be watered separately from shrubs and flowers).**
- **Drip irrigation systems** (which use less water than sprinklers) are recommended for trees, shrubs and flowers.