

## What is Xeriscaping?

Xeriscaping (pronounced zeh-ri-skayp-ing) is the process of creating a landscape that requires little to no watering once established. It's all about designing a sustainable space based on your specific region and climate. It is the practice of landscape design that incorporates drought tolerant plants that require very little maintenance and little to no fertilizer or pesticides once established. In addition to using hardier region specific plants, the practice of "hydrozoning" (grouping plants by water needs) is utilized when watering to conserve our biggest resource.

## Debunking the Myths

**False: Xeriscaping requires zero water use:** Annual and perennial plants alike require regular watering during the establishment phase, which is 2 to 4 weeks after planting. After that, you can reduce the frequency and amount of time spent watering perennials and native plants versus annuals.

**True:** Once native or naturalized plants reach maturity typically around the 2nd or 3rd year after planting, they should be able to survive and thrive with only natural rainfall with some irrigation during long periods of drought.

**False: It's all or nothing: Your yard is either water-friendly or it's not.**

**True:** While creating drought tolerant gardens is an integral part of Xeriscaping, it doesn't mean that you can't create an oasis area and enjoy some of your favourite water loving plants.

**False: Your yard will be full of cacti, rocks, and dust.**

**True:** The word Xeriscaping has become misused and in hot climates has become synonymous with UGLY, barren or even desolate yards. When properly designed a xeriscaped yard can be full of colourful, fragrant plants, flowers, and shrubs.

**False: You Can't Have a Lawn With Xeriscaping.**

**True:** Xeriscaping doesn't necessarily mean no grass. Rather it encourages us to promote biodiversity and think about where we actually want/need grass and to design around it. Think less lawn; not lawn-less.

**False: Xeriscaping is Expensive and Hard to Maintain.**

**True:** While there is a cost to start any new process once established, a xeriscaped yard requires less maintenance, less fertilizer, less pesticides and less watering. Financial incentives from the TOC may offset some of the initial cost.

## What You Need to Consider when transitioning to a Xeriscaped yard?

**Prepare your soil:** Incorporate things like topsoil, sand, and gravel into your organic soil. These amendments will help with drainage, moisture retention, and reduce shock since your soil will be more like natural soil. Rich organic soil is not the desired result for native and naturalized plants.

**Select your plants:** Native and naturalized drought tolerant plants work best. For recommendations go to the Landscaping Tab on the GECA website: <https://geca.ca>

**Plant:** Loosen the bottom of the roots before you plant them - this assists with establishment. You can also help your plants through the initial stress by adding one or two tablespoons of a soil booster per plant. A booster can be as simple as mixing 3 parts organic soil with 1 part worm castings.

**Mulch your plants:** This will decrease the amount of surface evaporation, reduce soil erosion, aid with maintaining a consistent soil temperature, and greatly reduce weed pressure in your garden.

**Water your plants:** The new plants will require watering for the first year or two until they become established, although not as much as the annuals you might typically plant. How much water will depend on what method you use. Drip irrigation works best but traditional irrigation, hand watering and sprinklers also work.

**Weed and Maintain:** Ongoing

For more information go to: <https://geca.ca> and click on the Landscaping Tab or scan the QR code for updates:



