



▶ Water  
Conserving  
Landscaping

**How YOU can Make  
Every Drop Count!**



## Texas – Ya gotta love her!

Our beautiful state is a land of extremes. From torrid summers to icy winters, severe drought to water aplenty, we've seen it all ... in just the past year!

With such diversity of climate, sustaining a traditional landscape can be a bit of a challenge. However, a beautiful yard can be yours without back-breaking labor and high water bills.

# Seven Steps to a Water Conserving Landscape

## Planning and design

Start with a plan. Determine how you want to use your landscape. Do you like to entertain outdoors or is it more of a play area for children? Do you have dogs that require an outdoor space? An outdoor storage area and a garden spot may also be a factor in the planning phase. Be sure to consider soil type, drainage, irrigation, sun and shade exposure, wind direction and views as well. Then create a scale drawing of the area to help visualize your plan.



Plan for desired uses — play areas, pets, gardening, etc.

## Soil analysis

Soil amendments can help improve water drainage, moisture penetration and the capacity of the soil to hold water. Adding compost or other organic matter can be beneficial and improve your soil.

## Practical turf areas

Use practical turf areas. Avoid narrow strips that are hard to maintain. Not all areas need grass. Groundcovers, pavers, patios and decking materials can reduce the turf and add beauty and usefulness to most landscapes.

## Appropriate plant selection

Select appropriate plants. Based on your preference, use mainly native and drought-tolerant plants in your landscape. Using native plants makes sense because they thrive better in this area, while requiring the least amount of water and attention.



Use native plants or those that have been adapted to our climate.

## Efficient Irrigation

Use efficient irrigation to make every drop count. Put the water where it will do the most good. The efficient hose-end sprinklers throw big drops close to the ground. Using misting sprinklers or sprinklers that throw water high



Evaporation can be higher with some sprinklers.

in the air means that much of the water will evaporate before it hits the ground. Using soaker hoses or a drip irrigation system puts the water on the plants' roots where it does the most good.

## Use of mulches

Proper mulching conserves water and prevents weed growth. Mulched soil loses half as much water to evaporation as soil without it. Mulch also reduces erosion and slows weed growth. Some common organic mulches include pine bark, shredded cypress, pecan hulls, cotton seed hulls, composted leaves and shredded landscape clippings.

## Appropriate maintenance

Although your new landscape will be low maintenance, this does not mean none whatsoever. A small amount of attention and action will be needed during the year to keep your landscape looking and feeling its best depending on the choices you made while creating your plan. Keep in mind that well-maintained landscapes are hardier and better able to withstand drought, freezing and pest problems.



Plant choices can determine the amount of work that will be needed.

For more information on water conserving, low maintenance landscaping go to the Texas SmartScape website at [www.txsmartscape.com](http://www.txsmartscape.com).

## Important Links to Online Resources



Texas SmartScape™ utilizes xeriscape principles, but goes beyond the basics by providing design, care, and plant search tools that are "Smart" for North Central Texas.

For additional information on native and adaptive plants, go to

Texas AgriLife Extension - [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/)

For additional information on the Texas SmartScape™ program, go to

Texas SmartScape™ - [www.txsmartscape.com/](http://www.txsmartscape.com/)

For additional water conservation information and brochures, go to

Texas Water Development Board - [twdb.texas.gov/publications/brochures/conservation/index.asp](http://twdb.texas.gov/publications/brochures/conservation/index.asp)

For information on lake or groundwater levels, go to  
Water Data for Texas – [waterdatafortexas.org](http://waterdatafortexas.org)

To schedule a speaker on water conservation, Texas SmartScape™, monitoring wells, or the groundwater conservation district, contact

Karen Siddall, Public Relations & Education Administrator, Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District – (817) 556-2299  
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## **PRAIRIELANDS GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

ELLIS HILL JOHNSON SOMERVELL

Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District was created in response to a finding by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) that groundwater shortages were expected in Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell counties over the next 25 years.

The TCEQ finding required local residents to create a groundwater conservation district, or else the TCEQ would mandate one, enabling legislation for the Prairielands GCD to be created in 2009 by the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality designated a large area over the Trinity Aquifer from the Red River to Central Texas as a Priority Groundwater Management Area (PGMA) due to the critical groundwater declines facing the area.

The Prairielands GCD is located in the north prairies of Texas, encompassing the four-county area. The District spans 2,870 square miles and overlays the Trinity Aquifer.

Prairielands GCD is here to manage, protect and conserve groundwater and seeks to balance the needs of all groundwater users with the requirements of a sustainable aquifer. The District operates in a fair and equitable manner through a management plan and rules. They are designed to prevent waste, collect data, plan for future resources, and educate people about water conservation and aquifer protection.

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