



Planning your planting

Create 'watering zones' in your garden by grouping plants with similar watering needs. This will allow you to make more efficient use of your garden water by ensuring that no plants are over or under watered.

The Waterwise 'Drop Zone' system makes it easy to identify a plant's water requirements. This system divides plants into one of three groups depending on their watering needs. 'Three Drop' plants require the most watering (usually every second day in summer), whereas 'Two Drop' and 'One Drop' plants require less watering respectively.

It's also important to reticulate only once on your allocated days, either before 9am or after 6pm. Look for the Waterwise 'Drop Zone' system at your local Waterwise garden centre. To find the centre closest to you, call the Waterwise Helpline on 13 10 39.

Remember, a small amount of planning now can save plenty of water in the future.

Town of Kwinana is a participant in the Water Campaign™, a voluntary sustainable water management capacity building program for local governments. The Water Campaign™ is delivered by ICLEI Oceania in collaboration with the Department of Water. For more information see www.iclei.org/oceania/water

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Planting a local native garden





In an era of rising temperatures and decreasing rainfall it is important to look at how we use water in our gardens.

Did you know?

About half of the water typically used in our homes is actually used to water the garden (and of that almost all is used to water lawns).

Many of us water lawns that we simply don't use, or water more than we need to. Similarly, often the plant species in our gardens are exotic and not entirely suitable to our climate – needing more water to survive.

Why go native?

- Local native plants are best suited to the local climate, conditions and soil. Therefore they require minimal inputs such as water, fertiliser and maintenance.
- They attract local wildlife, insects and birds and provide corridors of biodiversity in developed areas.
- They have minimal impact on the environment – unlike many introduced species, which have become bushland weeds and prove difficult and expensive to eradicate.
- They represent local heritage, teaching us about nature and our local identity.

Mulch. Mulch. Mulch.

If everyone fully utilised mulch in the garden, a much lower percentage of household water usage would end up on the garden.

The even better news is that mulching is very easy! Raw materials like woodchips and tree clippings are best, but any organic mulch will suffice. Simply spread at least 50mm of mulch over the whole planting area, leaving a small amount of breathing space at the base of the stem. Mulch can be applied at any time, but is best applied in mid spring or early summer. Be sure not to turn or disturb the mulch as this will break the fine feeder roots that develop between the mulch and the soil.

In addition to mulch, a wetting agent can help overcome water repellence in soils, allowing water to penetrate the soil more quickly and in larger amounts. You can find wetting agents at your local nursery or garden centre.

Want to know more?

The Department of Water is committed to making sure that the water needs of Western Australia are met now, and in the future. Small steps we each take can make a big difference to the sustainability of our precious water supply. If you would like to know more, visit the Water Corporation's website 'Being Waterwise' www.watercorporation.com.au

Key tips for reducing groundwater use.

- Design gardens and landscaping to enhance absorption of rain into the ground and to minimise evaporation – by using local native garden beds, mulch and waterwise irrigation.
- Keep planted areas dense and group plants with similar water needs together and make use of windbreaks.
- Prepare the soil before planting to ensure that plants can make the most of the water they need.
- Re-use water from the home in the ground, by using grey water from the laundry or bathroom. For more information visit the Department of Health website www.public.health.wa.gov.au/3/667/2/greywater_water.pm and contact your local council's Environmental Health Officer for approval.