



**Lawn**

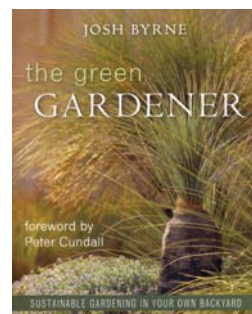
- Lawns typically need more water than hardy shrubs and ground covers. They are also high maintenance, so when planning your garden, carefully consider whether you need lawn, and if so keep it to the minimum area required.
- Hardy ground covers or stylish paving can make a great lawn replacement (but avoid creating heat traps near the house from pavers that transfer summer sun into the house slab or reflect heat up onto windows).
- If you do decide to have lawn, choose a water-efficient species such as Saltene, Zoysia or one of the soft-leaved Buffalos. Soil preparation is also important to improve the water-efficiency of lawns.

**WHY?**

Having a waterwise garden will:

- Save water - every drop counts!
- Reduce your impact on the environment (better biodiversity and less fertiliser leaching).
- Reduce maintenance (less pruning and mowing required).
- Save money on water bills!

Remember that the average West Australian household uses about half of their water in the garden!



**PLANTING A WATERWISE GARDEN**

Climate change is resulting in a reduction in rainfall in Western Australia. As a result water guzzling gardens need to become a thing of the past. With some creative thinking and planning, we can all turn our gardens into beautiful and productive places that are more in tune with our unique Western Australian conditions.

**WHAT CAN I DO?**

Select waterwise plants to create an attractive, low maintenance garden that helps conserve our precious water resources.

**HOW DO I DO IT?**

**Planning and Design**

Some basic planning is critical to achieve a beautiful and waterwise garden – just follow these handy hints:

- Observe the micro-climate in different parts of your garden (e.g. sunny, shady, windy, etc) – this will allow you to select plants that are best suited to particular conditions.
- Consider the topography of your garden for positioning different plants. Choose hardy, deep rooted plants for sloping areas where water tends to run off rather than infiltrate the soil. Place thirsty plants in depressions where rain (and irrigation) water collects.

Change 50m<sup>2</sup> of lawn area to a waterwise garden bed and save each year.



**JOSH BYRNE**  
sustainable gardening specialist and popular media personality provides advice on planting a Waterwise garden.

Text from *The Green Gardener* by Josh Byrne © Penguin Group (Australia). Based on material developed by the Water Corporation. For more information go to [www.watercorporation.com.au](http://www.watercorporation.com.au). The Living Smart brand has been developed by The Meeting Place Community Centre, the City of Fremantle, Murdoch University and Southern Metropolitan Regional Council to support a suite of programs developing capacity in community sustainability. Published by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, Perth, Western Australia. February 2008. The information provided in this brochure is provided in good faith. However the accuracy or appropriateness of the information is not guaranteed.





- Group plants with similar water requirements together so you can irrigate them efficiently – this is called “hydrozoning”. Waterwise Garden Centres label their plants as ‘one, two or three drop plants’ to assist you with grouping them in the garden. To locate the nearest accredited centre just follow the ‘Being Waterwise’ links from [www.watercorporation.com.au](http://www.watercorporation.com.au).
- The majority of your garden should be set aside for hardy “one drop” Waterwise plants which are suitable for Perth conditions. Keep the area for thirsty or “three drop” plants (including vegetables and annual flower beds) to a minimum, and locate these close to the house for maximum enjoyment.
- An incredibly diverse range of Waterwise plants are available, so you can create any style of garden you like – including Mediterranean, cottage, formal and even tropical themes! Garden design ideas and compatible species lists are available from the Water Corporation at [www.watercorporation.com.au](http://www.watercorporation.com.au)

## Plant Selection

The Perth area has unique and challenging gardening conditions due to our Mediterranean climate, with long, hot, dry summers and short, cool winters. Most of us are also gardening on Swan Coastal Plain soils which typically have low water holding capacity and become water repellent when dry. Consider using native plants that are ideally suited to your conditions and need minimal watering once established. Local native (or indigenous) species have the added bonus of providing food and habitat for local fauna. There is a huge range of hardy exotic species that are well suited to Western Australia’s conditions but are not invasive weeds.

You can get some help in choosing stunning waterwise plants for your garden from a number of places:

- Visit your local accredited nursery or garden centre and enquire about species suited to your area. They can also help you to identify your soil type characteristics, including texture and pH (a measure of soil acidity).

- The Water Corporation’s “Waterwise Plants for Perth” is an excellent database of native and exotic plants that (once established) will flourish on one watering a week or less during summer – follow the links from [www.watercorporation.com.au](http://www.watercorporation.com.au)
- The Wildflower Society of Western Australia provides species lists for the different Western Australian soil types to assist you in selecting the appropriate local native species – visit the website

<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~wildflowers/dynamic.php>

## Planting

- Autumn (April and May) is one of the best times to plant in Western Australia due to the cooler weather. Give your new plants the best chance to thrive by planting at the right times.
- Incorporate appropriate soil conditioners (including compost and wetting agents) into the soil and mulch around the base of the plants to improve the moisture holding capacity of soils.
- If establishing a garden using plant pots use a premium grade potting mix – it has a higher water holding capacity so you will not need to water as often.
- Unglazed clay pots are porous and dry out quickly. Coat these with a sealing agent prior to planting, but make sure the drainage holes are clear.