Notes and websites for those who are replacing lawns with low-water landscapes


2. Have you already removed the turf or do you need to learn how to do it?
   b. See [http://publicgarden.ucdavis.edu/public-garden/drought-resources](http://publicgarden.ucdavis.edu/public-garden/drought-resources) for how Stacey sheet mulched her lawn to kill off turf without chemicals.

3. Are you a “do it yourself” type person or are you looking to hire someone?
4. If looking to hire do you have a budget?
5. Are you willing to do it in pieces over time? (again the budget thing)
6. What style do you find appealing? Many online resources see below.
7. Do you like to work in the yard or do you want super low maintenance? This will change your plant selections.

Things you need:

1. **A style you like:** Regional Water Authority has a great site with lots of images at [http://www.rwa.watersavingplants.com/](http://www.rwa.watersavingplants.com/).
   
   Also the Arboretum is featuring and will be adding more gardens as the season progresses see [http://publicgarden.ucdavis.edu/public-garden/life-after-lawn-advice-natural-does-not-have-to-mean-messy](http://publicgarden.ucdavis.edu/public-garden/life-after-lawn-advice-natural-does-not-have-to-mean-messy).
   
   Another route to same site is [http://publicgarden.ucdavis.edu/plant-sales](http://publicgarden.ucdavis.edu/plant-sales) (scroll down to see different gardens featured currently)

2. **Measurements** of the site: this is so you can figure out how many plants you need based on their mature size.
   
   A good idea of the exposure (north, east, south or west) and the sun and shade conditions. So you can group plants sharing the same light needs. Take time to observe the sun and shade at different times of the day.

3. **Irrigation system:** definitely necessary for establishment of the new landscape especially for the first two years. Many types are available, a simple hose and sprinkler system that you turn on manually to in-ground piping and programmable controllers. Many homeowners opt for drip systems or mini-sprinklers these can also be operated by inexpensive controllers. They are less expensive to install but flexible and can be added onto as needs change. Plants will need more water coverage of soil as roots expand outward. Existing turf irrigation can often be used with modest modification and planting so as not to block heads.

4. **A good plant list:** Plants that will grow in our area and are known to be tough and adaptable.

5. **A designer** to help you place plants if you don’t want to do it yourself. **Contractor/gardener** to do any work you can’t do yourself.
Things to know about irrigating your new garden:

**Establishment Irrigation** (the first two years after planting) is different than **Maintenance Irrigation**.

**Establishment irrigation:**

1. Need to keep **young plant roots moist** in *both the root ball* (the mass that came out of the container and that you put in the ground) *and in the soil surrounding* it. This will entice the young roots to grow outward into the moist surrounding soil.
2. Often **basins** are placed around the plant to hold the applied water to that area. These should be removed once it seems the plants have “taken”, that is are sending roots out into surrounding soil. You can usually see this by the production of new growth.
3. **How long to water?**
   a. **Depends** on your irrigation method, automatic or manual, drip, spray, or hose end. There are two important things to consider: a) **frequency of irrigation** and b) **amount of water** being delivered. The rate at which the water is applied by a system varies tremendously from type to type. For drip emitters it can vary from 2 gallons per hour to 27 gallons per hour depending on type.
   b. **Depends** on *the time of year, temperatures, wind and rain*. For establishment in fall we recommend *every other day while the weather is hot* stretching to once a week once it gets cool and none at all if we begin to get regular rainfall. Look at your plant and see if it is wilting, turning gray, or losing leaves. Look at the soil and if its dry and you just planted you should probably water. Young plants should not dry out while one year olds can certain go until the soil dries on the surface or longer.

Once you are ready to set up your irrigation system I recommend the Regional water Authority website information at [http://www.rwa.watersavingplants.com/Watering-Guide/](http://www.rwa.watersavingplants.com/Watering-Guide/). The Be Water Smart program site (list above also) has images of gardens to help you find the look you like, plant lists and under Resources things like sample irrigation schedules.

Also the Arboretum and Public garden web site at arboretum.ucdavis.edu click on the button on the left of the screen called Home Water Conservation and Drought Resources to access more plant lists, designs and to other links.