step 2

H2OVERHAUL

Plants & Alternative Turf
You don’t have to sacrifice beauty to save water. There are plenty of gorgeous plant options that thrive in low-water conditions. Use these tips to select the perfect landscape-enhancing plants.

Don’t let just any old plant slurp me up. I’m a precious resource you know.

Selecting Water-Wise Plants

Choose plants that work for you. Look for low water grasses, trees, shrubs, plants and groundcovers that fit your environment. (Consider microclimate, location, sun exposure, desired maintenance, intended use and your budget.)

Mix it up. Select plants with varying colors, height and blooming seasons to create visual interest and pops of color throughout the year.

Give room for growth. Before you plant, find out how tall and wide each plant will grow to provide the space they need as they mature.

Create a color scheme. Select plants with complementary colors and use both warm and cool colors to create depth. Repeat the scheme throughout your landscape for a balanced color flow.

Soak up some inspiration. For ideas, check out our “Expert Design Pick” in this kit and take a look at the recommended plants on our Plant Suggestion list at ThorntonWater.com/H2Overhaul.com.

Visit PlantSelect.org, a local resource for plant selections, landscaping designs and helpful information. Here are some ways to explore:

1. Click Garden Ideas (under “Design” in the top navigation) for downloadable landscaping designs.
2. Click Find a Plant to find the best plants for your landscape.
3. Click Where to Buy to search for local retailers and garden centers. Call ahead to ask if they have the plants you want.
Water-Wise Meets Budget-Wise

Stick with Perennials
Low-water perennials are a cost-effective choice; adding beauty to your yard year after year. Once established, all they need is natural precipitation with a little supplemental water during hot and dry parts of the season.

Investing In Expensive Trees & Shrubs?
Before taking the plunge:

Set yourself up for success with high-quality soil. (See “Step 4: Soil Prep & Planting” in your H₂Overhaul Kit.)

Plant in areas with suitable amounts of heat and limited wind exposure.

Consider how big each tree or shrub will grow to be (tall and wide), allowing ample room for them to mature.

Hydrozone for Maximum Savings
Group plants together according to how much water and sun exposure they need. This saves water and helps plants flourish.

Put high-water plants in easily accessible areas or in low-lying drainage areas, near downspouts or in the shade of other plants to utilize runoff and natural shade.

In areas that are harder to reach or aren’t easily accessible, plant low-water plants that require less frequent watering.

Get A Water-Wise Garden In A Box
Resource Central offers professionally designed gardens with a curated selection of beautiful perennial Xeric (low-water) plants to replace turf, reduce watering and generally promote conservation practices for landscapes.

Order yours at ResourceCentral.org/gardens.

I love me a nice, tight budget.
Expert Design Pick

Why We Love It

Filled with color and texture, this design features shrubs and easy-care perennials that look gorgeous year-round plus an array of flowers that bloom from spring to fall.

It attracts bees with fragrant flowers and foliage as well as sun-loving, drought-tolerant and deer resistant plants that grow in well-drained soil (which needs little to no amendment).

It’s versatile enough to be used as a perimeter planting (planted down the sides of a yard) or it can be widened for use in a broader bed by placing the largest plants in the center and mirroring the design on the other side.

Find more sample designs at PlantSelect.org/design/downloadable-designs/

Water-Wise Cottage
Designer: Lauren Springer Ogden

Plant List

A Cheyenne® Mock Orange or Blue Velvet® Honeysuckle (2)
B Sonoran Sunset® Hyssop or Blue Blazes Hyssop (6)
C Redleaf Rose or Silver Fountain Butterfly Bush (1)
D Silver Sage or Giant Lamb’s Ears (11)
E Dalmatian Daisy or Anthea Yarrow (6)
F Shadow Mountain® Penstemon or Red Rocks® Penstemon (11)
G Little Trudy® Catmint (14) or Select Blue Catmint (10)
H Platinum® Sage or ilverton® Bluemat Penstemon (20)
I Winecups (3) or Table Mountain® Ice Plant (15)
J ‘Shimmer’ evening primrose (10) or Silver Blade® Evening Primrose (6)
K Purple Mountain® Sun Daisy or Compact English Lavender (6)

Flurf your turf! Yes, that’s totally a word. It means “to get rid of, to replace.”
Selecting Turf Alternatives

It takes a lot of water (and work) to keep a lawn lush and green. Plot your practical turf plan for a smarter, low-maintenance yard.

Design your landscape and determine your best turf options based on sun exposure, irrigation, intended use, soil or water challenges, maintenance and your budget.

Explore this guide to find a variety of low-water turf options, ground covers and hardscapes that can enhance your space.

Low traffic, hard to maintain areas:
Groundcovers, drought-resistant flower gardens, ornamental shrubs and shade trees are perfect for areas that have been a real pain in the grass (near foundations, along medians or on steep slopes).

High traffic areas: Low-water turf is ideal for areas designed to accommodate children’s play, sports activities, entertaining and pets.

Did you know? You can clean your sidewalk, driveway, deck and other surfaces with a broom or blower to save water every time.
**Comparison Of Grasses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tall Fescue</th>
<th>Buffalograss</th>
<th>Kentucky Bluegrass</th>
<th>Dog Tuff Grass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Color</strong></td>
<td>Light to dark green</td>
<td>Light green to blue green</td>
<td>Light to dark green</td>
<td>Bright green color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Green Season</strong></td>
<td>Long: March - December</td>
<td>Short: May - September</td>
<td>Long: March - December</td>
<td>Medium: early June - October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mowing Requirement</strong></td>
<td>More frequent/grows fast</td>
<td>Infrequent/none</td>
<td>Less frequent</td>
<td>Does not require mowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fertilizer Requirement</strong></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iron Chlorosis</strong></td>
<td>Infrequent</td>
<td>Infrequent</td>
<td>More frequent</td>
<td>Infrequent to none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disease Problems</strong></td>
<td>Infrequent</td>
<td>Almost none</td>
<td>Can be disease prone</td>
<td>Almost none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insect Problems</strong></td>
<td>Almost none</td>
<td>Almost none</td>
<td>Occasional/more common</td>
<td>Almost none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traffic Tolerance</strong></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traffic Recuperation</strong></td>
<td>Poor to fair</td>
<td>Poor to fair</td>
<td>Good to excellent</td>
<td>Good to excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heat/Cold Tolerance</strong></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shade Tolerance</strong></td>
<td>Good to excellent</td>
<td>Poor to fair</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Irrigation</strong></td>
<td>20-22” annually.</td>
<td>8-15” annually.</td>
<td>15-26” annually. Proper management can reduce water consumption.</td>
<td>Once established, water every 10-14 days. Apply ½-1” water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maintenance</strong></td>
<td>Frequent spring mowing.</td>
<td>Infrequent mowing, Irrigation and fertilization.</td>
<td>Amend soil to 6” before planting. Mow between 2-3”. Use mulching blade. Aerate once a year. Use organic fertilizer.</td>
<td>Avoid using weed killers if possible. If you mow, start in early July. Mow every 5-7 days. Use organic fertilizer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://gardencentersofcolorado.org/pdfs/care_sheets/Selecting_the_Right_Grass.pdf](http://gardencentersofcolorado.org/pdfs/care_sheets/Selecting_the_Right_Grass.pdf)
**Did you know?**
Replacing thirsty grass with turf alternatives can save on average more than 30,000 gallons of water while also adding functional beauty to your yard.

**Dog Tuff Grass**
This African grass holds up well to wear and tear. It is a sterile hybrid so it can’t reseed and become an invasive weed (although it could get into your neighbor’s yard via runners!)

Find out more at PlantSelect.org
Additional Turf Alternatives

In addition to low-water turf options, there are a variety of water-wise groundcovers and hardscapes that can enhance your space.

Give Ground Covers A Go

Low-growing ground covers can be used as an alternative to turf in areas with low foot traffic. Usually chosen for texture, density and how well they spread and choke out weeds, ground covers enhance the soil by acting as a mulch.

During the first year, any new ground cover will require weeding and mulching, but once established, little care is needed.

Check out a diverse list of gorgeous ground cover options at PlantSelect.org

Say Yes To No-Water Hardscapes

Great for high-traffic areas, hardscapes are the nonliving elements within a landscape. Hardscapes include patios, decks, fences, boulders, pathways and lighting. They save a lot of water, have multi-uses and look fantastic.

Expert Tip:
Consider adding pervious pathways and surfaces to your space, which let water absorb into the ground.

Life is easy when scapes are hard.

Control groundcovers or those rascals will take over your yard. Create a barrier with low bricks, wood or any lawn edging placed a few inches into the soil.
Now you have a knack for picking perennials!

Additional Resources

Visit ThorntonWater.com/H2Overhaul for additional ideas to help you plan.

You’ll find links to resources such as lists of water-wise plants, trees and low-water grasses as well as searchable sites to customize your plant or turf selection and images of mature water-wise plants.

ThorntonWater.com/H2Overhaul