

Western Oregon has a Mediterranean-type climate, which is characterized by mild, wet winters and dry, warm summers. Our dry period typically lasts 3 months (July through September) and daytime temperatures may exceed 90° F. This combination of dry days and summer heat will cause stress to many common landscape plants if they are not irrigated regularly. As a result, municipal water use in the Willamette Valley frequently doubles or triples during the summer months due to outdoor watering. As the population in our region grows, meeting our summer watering needs is becoming more challenging.

When we draw water from our reservoirs faster than we can keep them filled, we threaten the supply of

water needed for drinking, irrigation, manufacturing, fish, and emergencies such as firefighting. In addition to seasonal peaks, daily water use patterns can add stress to already stressed water distribution systems. Most automatic irrigation timers are set to go off in the early mornings certain days of the week, therefore utilities must often super-size their facilities to meet early morning demands that may or may not occur in any given year based on weather conditions. If customers set irrigation timers at other times of the morning or night, water utilities would be assured of making the most of existing facilities before building new expensive structures.

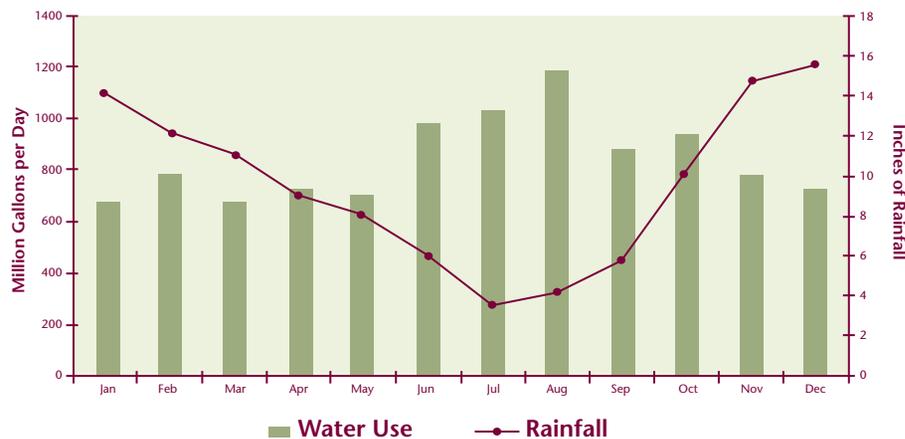
Water conservation measures can enable water providers to delay building costly new facilities or seeking

This guide was created by horticulture and conservation experts as a tool to assist the general gardener in making decisions about how to use water more efficiently in their landscapes. In addition to the water savings you will see, there are a number of other benefits that come with water efficient landscaping. They include reduced fertilizer and chemical use, less weed growth, less energy use, less water runoff, and reduced maintenance.

Landscapes add value, beauty and livability to our homes and keeping them water efficient is a critical part of being a good steward. Whether you are redoing an existing landscape or landscaping a new home or business, consider this guide as a place to begin your efforts.

By following the seven basic steps of water efficient landscaping, and by using this Water Efficient Plants for the Willamette Valley guide, you will discover trees, shrubs, bulbs, perennials, ground covers, and ornamental grasses that were chosen because they are suited to our Mediterranean-type climate and require less water, fertilizer, maintenance or other special care once they are established. These plants will also allow you to continue to achieve color, diversity, texture, and beauty in your landscape.

Typical Residential Water Use vs Rainfall West of Cascades



new water sources, thus helping keep water rates down. While conservation alone will not eliminate the need to increase our water supply, it can make a substantial impact and balance the effect of population growth.