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# “THE PUDDLE”

THE NORTH KINGSTOWN DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY NEWSLETTER

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September 2022

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Fall, the right time for changes to your yard, is an appropriate time to say – Don't Landscape – Xeriscape!

Many people believe that a colorful, lush, and vibrant garden needs lots of water. In reality, the same ends can be achieved through the application of Xeriscape practices, resulting in a 35 to 70 percent water savings. Xeriscape (pronounced zeer-eh-scape) is a combination of the Greek word *Xeros*, which means dry or arid, and the English word *Scape*, meaning vista. Xeriscape was originated in Denver, Colorado, in 1978 by a water conservation task force of the Denver Water Department (The term *Xeriscape* is a registered trademark of the Denver Water Department). Xeriscape landscaping is defined as "water conservation through *creative* and *appropriate* landscaping." The key words here are "creative" and "appropriate". You can have almost any garden look you like and still save water. Your garden can be a beautiful oasis and significantly increase the value of your home while saving water. Xeriscape landscaping is founded on seven principles. While these principles have been used in traditional landscaping for years as separate or partially combined principles, Xeriscape incorporates all of them into one holistic method resulting in a unique landscaping approach that combines all the necessary elements to achieve water conservation. When all seven principles are implemented correctly, the result is a significant reduction in water consumption without the loss of the beauty that landscape provides.

## Principle 1 – Planning and design

This is the most important step in successful xeriscaping. Think twice, plant once, and save time and money as well as water.

## Principle 2 – Practical Turf Areas

Grass is a high water user. Choose fescues instead of traditional ryegrasses and bluegrasses. Limit grassy areas with creative uses of mulches and groundcovers.

## Principle 3 – Soil Analysis

Fix your soil problems before planting and your success rates will skyrocket.

## Principle 4 – Mulches

Mulches control weeds and help to minimize evaporation. Think beyond the traditional organic mulches (barks & chips) and use colorful inorganics for variety and color.

## Principle 5 – Efficient Irrigation

Sound irrigation design combined with the grouping of plants with similar water needs help to guarantee success. Remember drip irrigation beats sprinklers no matter how you look at it.

## Principle 6 – Appropriate Maintenance

Proper pruning, weeding, fertilization, and pest control can make the difference between a successful drought tolerant garden and an expensive waste of time and money.

## Principle 7 – Appropriate Plant Choice

The URI Cooperative Extension has an excellent list of drought tolerant plants for RI gardens available online. For more information, visit their website at [www.uri.edu/ce/factsheets/index.htm](http://www.uri.edu/ce/factsheets/index.htm).



Healthy Landscapes is a project of the University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension and the Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island.

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## North Kingstown's 10 Top “To Do’s” for Stormwater Management

1. Never dump, wash, or rake anything into the path of a stormdrain.
2. Sweep spilled fertilizers, grass clippings, and soil off sidewalks and driveways and back onto the lawn. Sweep, don't hose, the driveway.
3. Water wisely: the lawn is usually happy with 1 inch per week, and that includes rainwater!
4. Divert rooftop runoff to a rain barrel or onto the lawn rather than a driveway. Collected water can even be used for watering plants.
5. Reduce the amount of fertilizers and pesticides that you apply to your lawn. You'll save money, too!
6. Never put hazardous household wastes (paint, paint thinner, oven cleaners, etc.) down stormdrains, indoor drains, or the trash. Call the Eco Depot at 942-1430 x 241.
7. If you have a septic system, have it inspected regularly and have it pumped at least every three to five years.
8. If you change your own motor oil, recycle the used oil.
9. Wash your vehicle at a designated car wash or on grass—not in the driveway.
10. Scoop your dog's poop. Then throw it in the trash.

### Why is Stormwater Management Important?

Just a reminder in this wicked, rainy year: storm water runoff carries pollutants and solid wastes directly to our streams, rivers, ponds, Narragansett Bay and the ocean. If property owners allow storm water to infiltrate slowly into the soil, it filters it as it replenishes the groundwater. This results in overall improved water quality as groundwater while it also feeds those same water bodies. You can help by installing a rain garden and channeling roof runoff into your lawn or a dry well. Check out the town's storm water page:

<http://www.northkingstown.org/252/Storm-Water> for ideas on what to do.



*Please be aware*

### **Semi-annual hydrant flushing will be scheduled for October 2022**

Hydrant flushing is an important component of North Kingstown's distribution system maintenance and is extremely important to providing safe and clean drinking water. Flushing of water mains is one component of North Kingstown's overall distribution system maintenance program. The flushing of mains removes sediment that normally accumulates in water pipes that could produce bacteria if not removed. The Water Department anticipates conducting our flushing program in Stony Lane section this fall.