

## WATER CONSERVATION LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES

These standards of practices have been drafted by industry experts, local municipalities and nonprofit organizations to promote water saving techniques and efficiency standards. The Wood River Valley is a dry ecosystem averaging 10-18 inches of precipitation a year. Using proper design, watering efficiently, and implementing sustainable practices can reduce the strain on this valuable resource and save water users money.

**SOIL AND COMPOST.** Soils with 25% compost can hold four times more water than soils without composted matter. Compost is an excellent way to amend existing soils or build better soil. By adding compost you improve water infiltration and decrease runoff and erosion. Compost improves the water holding capacity of the soil and improves the microorganism life in the soil which allows plants to utilize necessary soil nutrients and minerals. Healthier plants are able to better withstand drought. A minimum of 25% compost needs to be added to existing soils because the soil types in the Wood River Valley do not have adequate organic material for water holding capacity.

- All new turf areas require a soil depth of 6": ONE PART COMPOST TO 3 PARTS SOIL.
- All new shrub and flower beds require a soil depth of 12": ONE PART COMPOST TO 3 PARTS SOIL.
- During excavation, existing soil is to remain on site and temporarily fenced to protect from compaction.
- Protect and minimize disturbance of existing trees and vegetation when excavating.

**MULCH.** Organic mulch is composed of materials such as bark, wood chips, soil pep, and wood compost. Mulch works to keep plants cool, prevent soil crusting, minimizes evaporation and controls weed growth.

- All shrub beds, tree rings, exposed soil and beds should have 4-6" of mulch to minimize evaporation.
- Mulch in tree rings should go from the trunk to the outer drip line of the trees.

**VEGETATION.** Choosing the right vegetation can significantly reduce water use. Native or Drought Tolerant species require 1" or less of water per week.

- All turf species should be native or drought tolerant
- 30% of trees and shrubs should be low-water use plants



## WATER CONSERVATION LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES CONTINUED

**IRRIGATION.** Current irrigation system installations have no regulation for efficiency. Without using industry best practices, irrigation systems can waste 40-60% more water than they should. Following the best practices guideline, the user can rest assured that they will have a system that saves water and protects the water resources.

- All landscapes are limited to irrigating .5 acre or less unless there is an additional water right.
- Sprinkler system should have an approved backflow preventer if tied to a potable water source. Backflow should be installed so during winterization no air will be blown through backflow preventer.
- Sprinklers should be laid so that the area is getting hit with a minimum of two sprinklers. This provides for 100% coverage. Recommended overlap would be 5-10%.
- Limit of .60" per hour for sprinkler application rates. 1/2" bubblers are not recommended due to their high application rate and poor distribution uniformity (coverage).
- All sprinkler types should be pressure regulated to either 40 or 45 pounds of pressure at the sprinkler head to assure uniform sprinkler nozzle distribution rates. 15 psi is recommended for delivery to the far end of any drip zone for proper operation. Recommended spray height: 4" pop up for mowed grass and 12" pop up for natural areas.
- Sprinkler nozzles should have matched precipitation rate so the same amount of water covers each zone.
- Drip should be laid out in a grid pattern so water is uniform in distribution and it is staked to the ground a minimum of every 24" to assure the drip tube stays in contact with the soil.
- Drip pipe should be 1/2" pressure compensating and also have a check valve to prevent drain out.
- Pots, barrels, or hanging baskets are recommended to have a dedicated irrigation zone. Irrigated with 1/4" pressure compensating drip tube no longer than 15' in length. 1/4" drip tube shall not be more than .6 gallons per hour water pressure.
- Plant materials with similar water needs should be planted in the same irrigation zone.
- Sun areas and shade areas should each have a separate irrigation zone.
- Sprinkler controller should be able to adjust irrigation automatically via weather station or soil moisture sensor (Time Domain Transmission recommended). Irrigation and Smart Technologies should be installed to industry/manufacturers standards (including 2-wire systems).
- If property has more than 5 feet of elevation change - all sprinkler heads should incorporate check valves to prevent all of the water from draining out of the low heads.
- For larger sprinkler systems with a water supply that is larger than 1-1/2" a flow meter and master valve that is controlled from the sprinkler controller is recommended. Mainlines 3" and larger should use HDPE or Ductile Iron fittings. PVC mainline fittings are not recommended on 3" and larger mainlines.

