

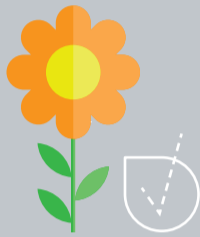
CHANGING HOW WE USE WATER

A guide to landscaping with less water in Central Otago

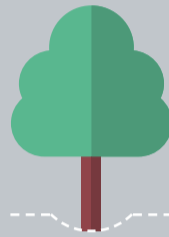
Landscaping with less water...

Creating a beautiful garden that needs less water is both possible and extremely satisfying. Worldwide, a growing appreciation of water as a precious resource is bringing a new perspective to landscaping. Central Otago is no different. We are becoming more aware of the cost of using treated drinking water on lawns and gardens, particularly with the introduction of water meters. Using less water does not mean sacrificing a beautiful garden. We can reduce our water consumption by using water more efficiently.

Ways to use less water in the garden...



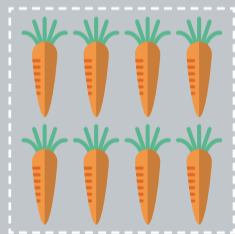
Choose plants which flourish with less water - see reverse for a list of suitable plants.



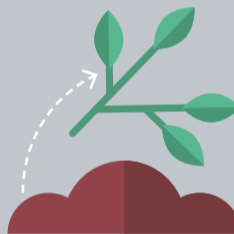
Plant trees in shallow basins to collect water and prevent runoff.



Have less lawn or try going 'lawnless'.



Group plants in zones according to water needs - more water for the vegetable garden.



Manage weeds Weeds use water... move them on!



Use dripper irrigation and avoid wetting pavements and hard surfaces.



Use a timer to avoid watering longer than you need.

Plant well-hardened, smaller grade plants to enable good tap root development.



Mulching the garden is one of the best ways to conserve moisture in our gardens. Most of us are familiar with organic mulches but have you considered using pea gravel or schist chip as a mulch?

There are advantages in using a gravel mulch. Plant based mulches break down adding organic matter and improving garden soils but the moisture they absorb tends to evaporate again.

Gravel/stony mulches allow moisture to penetrate through the gravels and resist evaporation. A gravel mulch needs to be around 7cm in depth to be effective and reduce evaporation. Gravel mulch can be placed close to plant stems.

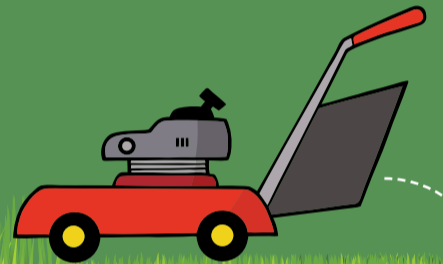
A huge range of plants from around the world can be used to create colourful, textural and resilient gardens that suit our Central Otago climate.



Lawns...

Most gardens have an area of lawn. Lawns can be thirsty but local research by Aqualinc suggests **40mm of water including rain** per week in summer can keep your lawn **green**. Your lawn will respond better to a **couple of longer soaks each week** rather than a light water each day.

Leave some length in your lawn when mowing in summer to reduce grass stress.



Reduce your lawn's drinking habit by trying the 'tuna can test'

to measure the hourly output of your irrigation system, then adjust your timings to apply 40mm of water per week, including any rainfall.

1. Place four empty 95gm tuna cans at spots around your lawn - some close to the sprinkler and some further away.
2. Turn the sprinklers on for 15 minutes.
3. Measure the water collected in each can.
4. If the cans are empty or too full try adjusting the sprinkler to get a more even cover.
5. Work out how long it takes to give your lawn half its weekly dose (20mm in summer) and then you know how long to leave the irrigation on.
6. Give your lawn 20mm of water twice a week in summer.

For further information or advice contact:

Jo Wakelin

at Otago Polytechnic Central Campus on 03 445 9900



Central Otago District Council



03 440 0056 - www.codc.govt.nz

CHANGING HOW WE USE WATER

Water Smart Plants

Which Plants are Suitable?

A rich array of plants from around the world are adapted to dry climates like ours. Many local native species are also well suited to our climate.

The plants shown here are just a small selection of plants with very low water needs.

As microclimates vary widely in Central Otago and within individual gardens, not every plant will be appropriate for every site.

Visit the Cromwell Water Conservation Garden in Waenga Drive and read the Cromwell Water Conservation Garden brochure on Council's website for more plant lists and ideas.

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Sedum 'Matrona'

This large upright stonecrop, with its large, grey blue leaves tinged with a purple flush, is as handsome in leaf as it is in bloom. Does especially well in full sun and dry soils.



Rosa 'Mutabilis'

An incredibly tough rose, Mutabilis does really well with less water. Nearly impervious to disease, it blooms continuously from spring until autumn. Rugosa roses are also worth a try.



Salvia 'Lubeca' Sage

This salvia produces electric violet-purple flowers on erect spikes over a long period in summer. There are many sages suited to Central Otago.



Helianthemum spp. Rock Rose

A cousin of the cistus, the rock roses form delightful, small, evergreen mounds in dry sunny sites. Colours range from hot orange to red, pinks, yellow and white.



Iris germanica Bearded Iris

Iris do incredibly well in Central Otago, and with such a range of colours and heights, there is a bearded iris for any garden.



Caryopteris x clandonensis Bluebeard

This smaller shrub is easy to grow and in late summer the misty blue flowers attract bumble bees by the dozens.



Tulipa 'Spring Green' Tulip

Like many bulbs, tulips complete their growth cycle before our dry summer. They enjoy dry soil around their bulbs when dormant. What beauty!



Perovskia atriplicifolia Russian Sage

This plant forms a bushy, upright clump of silvery stems. Spikes of violet-blue flowers appear in late summer. Russian sage flourishes in hot, sunny dry sites.



Lavandula angustifolia *Lavandula x intermedia* Lavender

There are many cultivars of these well-known, dry loving plants. All need full sun and one hard trim after flowering. Wonderful scent and bee attractant.



Vitis amurensis Ornamental Grapevine

This wonderful vine is superb for pergolas! It does not produce fruit so wasps are not attracted. Green leaves turn to stunning claret in autumn.



Narcissus Daffodils

There is a huge range and variety of daffodils available to provide those spring blooms. The bulbs evade the dry times by becoming dormant in summer. Plant in autumn.



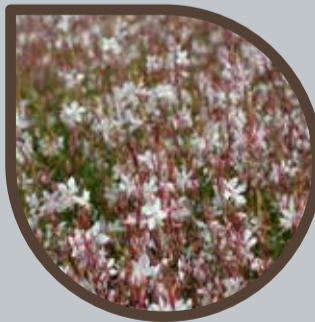
Brachyglottis 'Crispus' Daisy Bush

An 'ever-silver' native shrub. Produces glistening mounds of persistent, felted white foliage with 'crimped' edges. Grows as a tighter bush in sunny, dry conditions.



Gaura lindheimeri Whirling Butterflies

This fresh, pretty plant flowers for months. Wonderful long, elegant spikes of pink buds open to white flowers. Dislikes heavy wet soils.



Grevillea 'Scarlet Sprite' Grevillea

A spiky leaved shrub which produces masses of deep crimson flowers from late winter. It is much loved by nectar feeding birds. Good for warmer sites.



Muehlenbeckia astonii Tororaro or Wiggy-wig

This native shrub forms a glorious tangled, wiry mound of thin reddish zigzag stems with tiny heart shaped leaves. Tororaro thumbs its nose at our hot, dry and windy conditions.



Cistus x skanbergii Cistus

A low dense shrub with soft grey-green foliage and delicate, tissue like, pale pink flowers. Cistus revel in our hot Central sun. Overhead irrigation will kill this plant.



Arbutus unedo Strawberry Tree

This evergreen tree has neatly serrated leathery leaves and a refined shape. By late autumn clusters of creamy flowers and red fruits appear.



Sophora microphylla Kowhai

These tough native trees once grew much more widely in Central Otago. The early spring flowers bring bellbirds with their exquisite song to the garden.

