



FEBRUARY TIP SAVINGS: Up to \$400/YR
Avoided Emissions of CO₂: Up to 1,200 lbs./YR

\$USTAINABILITY \$AVINGS TIP

Desert Plants Are Great at Multi-Tasking ***Plants provide many functions for the landscape***

February is a great time to plant in the low desert as temperatures are still cool and roots can get established before the heat sets in. Whether planting an entire landscape or just replacing lost plants, hundreds of desert plants are available for just about any function in your landscape. Would you like to attract birds or butterflies to your yard? Desert plants are up for the challenge! Perhaps you are looking for year-round color, or how about a living fence or a cool, shady retreat?

Desert plants have special characteristics that help them tolerate our tough desert conditions including dryness, heat, alkaline soils and even winter frost. Light colored leaves help reflect sunlight to prevent heat buildup, small or waxy leaves are more water efficient, and succulent stems store water for later use. Native plants are at home in our difficult desert soils and tolerate our hot and cold extremes. Best of all they need very little water, a precious resource in the desert.

Each low-water-use plant can save you up to 550 gallons a year.

By selecting plants that are well adapted to our desert climate you'll have less maintenance and more time and money while enjoying a more attractive landscape. Using desert plants instead of turf grass also eliminates the need for polluting mowers and weed trimmers. Try these tips for successful plant selection:

PLANT SELECTION TIPS

1. Location, location, location. Check the mature plant size to ensure you are selecting the right plant for the right place. Consider other site conditions. For example, an area with reflected sun should have a plant that can tolerate extra hot conditions. Place trees to shade your home to save energy.
2. Group plants with similar water needs to create a landscape that is easier to maintain and is more water efficient. This way plants will also have fewer problems with being over or under watered.
3. Decide what function you want from your plants. You may want a plant for screening, shade, color, security (thorny plants), or to attract wildlife.

CHECKLIST FOR SAVINGS

- Attend one of the monthly **Living Green Workshop Series** programs to learn more about desert plants. Our February 13 program is **Landscape Plants for Shade, Color & Wildlife**. For a list of all programs visit www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability or call (480) 644-4400 for details.
- Call (480) 644-3306 to request a free booklet featuring over 200 low-water-use plants titled **Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert**.
- Visit our online version of the booklet at www.amwua.org.
- Visit the City of Mesa library for many locally written **books on desert plants**. See our recommended list of books at www.mesalibrary.org/research/links/living-green.aspx.

START SAVING

Start saving on your water bill while doing your part for *building a sustainable community*. Visit our Web site for more sustainability savings tips at www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability.

Learn to live Green