

The

Landscape Assessment Tool



The Landscape Assessment Tool (LAT) is a free and easy-to-use instrument to help you determine where you can reduce or eliminate outdoor water use. After using the Tool, refer to the Fact Sheets for help on how to proceed. For example, to remove turf or reduce your lawn area, refer to Fact Sheets about: how to remove lawn, overseeding, the basics of xeriscape, lawn alternatives, etc. Other Fact Sheets include edible gardening practices to conserve water, tips on changing outdoor water use habits, and altering your current irrigation system to conserve water.

The development of this Tool is an Okanagan Xeriscape Association initiative following the release of the Okanagan Basin Water Board's (OBWB) report Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Project, Phase 2 in March 2010. This study reports that in the Okanagan Valley domestic water use is 675 litres per person per day. Compare this to the provincial average (490 litres/day) and the national average (329 litres/day). The report states "outdoor domestic landscaping accounts for a year round average of 525 litres per person per day" and that "during the...irrigation season, total domestic water use by Okanagan residents averages more than 1,000 litres per person per day" – and we live in the driest area of the country!

The Landscape Assessment Tool is designed for use by Okanagan homeowners* who are concerned about how much water they use outdoors for such reasons as rising water costs, unnecessary use of a valuable resource, impact on the environment (wildlife, groundwater health, food crops), etc. The LAT is particularly helpful for those who have already made the decision to reduce outdoor water consumption.

Once the Assessment is done the Fact Sheets can help you decide where you want to make changes to your landscape. Even if the decision is to make dramatic changes, the project does not have to be done all at once. It is advisable, however, to sketch out your plans for the entire landscape to help you stay on track and proceed in a logical manner.

* The LAT is readily adaptable to commercial applications or multi-unit properties such as strata developments, apartment buildings, etc.

TIPS

- Encourage participation by all members of your household.
- Do the Assessment on a day when the weather is enjoyable.
- Before stepping outdoors, gather the supplies you need: paper, pencil, clipboard or a similar hard surface, and tape measure.
- Dress comfortably.
- Concentrate on the task; avoid interruptions.

