

Embracing Dormancy, Installing a Patio, or Creating a Meadow

This Fact Sheet introduces three other options for reducing water use on your lawn.

EMBRACING DORMANCY

The simplest of these options is to embrace “Gold is the New Green”, that is, allow your lawn to go ‘gold’ during the hot and dry summer months. As illustrated in the image to the left, it appears the lawn is dead. In fact, the Kentucky Bluegrass is in dormancy, a natural state for cool season grasses. When the cooler, wetter weather arrives in September, the lawn will green up again, much as it does in the spring at the beginning of the growing season.

In the meantime, enjoy the low maintenance!

For more information on changing your watering habits, click [here](#).

INSTALLING A PATIO

Like any of the options presented in the Landscape Assessment Tool Fact Sheets, be sure to plan or design any changes on paper before beginning the work.

Depending on your skill level, how much time you have to devote to the project, and how complex the work is, you may wish to hire a contractor to install a hardscape patio where you previously had lawn.

Our recommendation is the use of a permeable product such as paving stones, permeable pavement, decomposed granite, etc. This allows rain to penetrate into the soil, minimizing run-off problems and maintaining a healthy ecosystem for subsurface micro and macro organisms.

CREATING A MEADOW

A meadow is a great option for either a lawn replacement or a transition zone between wild (native) and conventional areas in your yard. They are beautiful to look at and provide nectar, food and shelter for birds and pollinators.

Similar to seeding a low-water blend of lawn seed, it is important that particular effort be put into preparing the site by removing as many weeds as possible. If the soil is disturbed (through tilling or sod removal), be sure to allow time for weed seeds to germinate (perhaps more than once) to ensure your meadow is a success. It is also important to be able to recognize the weeds so you will be able to differentiate between weed seedlings and your meadow mix when you are weeding your new meadow.

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TIPS

- Choose a sunny location.
- Be sure to use seeds and plants that are native to the Okanagan Valley; avoid scattering a 'Wildflower Meadow Mix' as these products often contain undesirable species and/or weed seeds.
- Use a mix of wildflower seeds and native grass seeds to get a natural look. Plugs (small plants rooted in containers) can 'jump start' your meadow project as they do not have to go through germination and the treacherous seedling stage.
- The best time to seed is in early spring for late summer/early fall. If your species selection includes annuals, seed in the spring so the plants can complete their life cycle and produce new seed before frost.
- Try mixing the seeds with vermiculite or sand to obtain more even distribution.
- Seed on a day with very little or no wind.
- After seeding, rake the area lightly to give some coverage to the seeds, then tamp it down.
- Water the area thoroughly and keep seeds moist with daily light sprinkling until they have germinated. Continue to water until the plants are well established, paying particular attention in the hot summer months.
- Do not fertilize your meadow.
- Weeding will be necessary, especially in the first year. After two or three years, the meadow should be robust enough to minimize weed seed germination.
- Begin weeding maintenance when the meadow has grown to the point where undesirable growth can be identified.
- Mow or cut your meadow in late fall to encourage reseeding.
- Be patient! Some wildflowers do not bloom until their second season.