



## Texas SmartScape™ Talking Points

- ★ **Information about the Texas SmartScape™ program is available at [www.txsmartscape.com](http://www.txsmartscape.com).** It includes information on how to plan, design, and search for native and adapted plants suitable for the North Central and West Texas regions.
- ★ **Extreme weather conditions, including periods of drought, are the reality in North Texas.** Generally, the majority of rainfall occurs in the spring and fall. The hottest months of July and August, when temperatures often exceed 100°F, are frequently the driest. To maintain a traditional, non-drought-tolerant landscape under such harsh environmental conditions requires tremendous amounts of water.
- ★ **Approximately 30% of your water bill is spent on outdoor water use.** More than half of this is used on watering lawns and gardens. Since native and adapted plants require less water than non-adapted plants, you will save money by using less water to maintain them. Making your landscape a Texas SmartScape landscape can save you money, providing that you reduce your watering accordingly.
- ★ **Plant roots are opportunistic.** They grow where there is water. Deep, infrequent watering creates deep roots. Shallow, frequent watering creates short roots. As water evaporates from the soil surface, short-rooted plants and lawns need water more often. Deep-rooted plants and lawns are able to absorb water from the deeper soil over a longer period of time.
- ★ **Water efficiently.** Some experts estimate that as much as 50% of irrigation water is wasted due to evaporation, wind, or runoff caused by inefficient irrigation methods. Whenever possible, water between 8 p.m. and 10 a.m.; early morning is best. Water trees separately by placing a soaker hose under the outer ring of branches and let the hose drip for several hours, as needed. Water lawns slowly, allowing water to reach a depth of 6 inches. Avoid runoff by adjusting watering duration, volume of spray heads, or direction of sprinkler/spray heads.
- ★ **Mulching suggestion.** Mulch all flower, shrub, and garden areas with approximately 3 inches of material and leave grass clippings on your lawn. This helps the soil retain moisture. (Never sweep grass clippings or other debris into the storm drain system.)
- ★ **Rainfall runoff carries pollution directly into our waterways.** The water from a storm washes everything in its path into the storm drains and then directly into creeks, rivers, and lakes without being treated. Since the source of this pollution cannot be easily pinned down or “pointed to,” it is called nonpoint source pollution.

- ★ **Fertilizer and pesticide applied in both urban and rural areas is one of our significant sources of nonpoint source pollution.** Fertilizer is most often applied in the spring and/or fall, the two times we receive significant rainfall. As a result, a high percentage of the fertilizer never reaches the targeted plants, but instead enters our waterways through normal runoff. If you stick to plants local to your region, you'll find they usually grow vigorously with minimal use of fertilizer. The best soil amendment to increase growth and health is organic compost. This method offers a non-polluting solution. Native and adapted plants often don't require much—if any—pesticides.
- ★ **It is much less expensive to prevent stormwater runoff pollution than to remove it.** If concentrations of pesticides and fertilizers in stormwater runoff continue to increase, very costly options to treat runoff will have to be considered by cities/counties. By using Texas SmartScape techniques, you can help prevent runoff pollution and avoid future stormwater treatment costs to remove pesticides and fertilizers.
- ★ **The two fastest growing outdoor hobbies in America are birding and gardening.** Installing a Texas SmartScape landscape is a wonderful way to increase your enjoyment of both. Furthermore, it's a project the whole family can participate in and benefit from. In a Texas SmartScape landscape, kids can investigate and learn about the natural world around them.
- ★ **March Is Texas SmartScape Month.** Texas SmartScape Month is a regionally coordinated effort to promote the principles of Texas SmartScape, a tool to help homeowners and gardening enthusiasts create beautiful yards that require less water, pesticides, and fertilizers to thrive. Since March is an active month for landscaping, this an excellent time to conduct public education events on water conservation, pollution prevention, and composting. During March, cities and other interested organizations are encouraged to plan events to disseminate the Texas SmartScape message to their citizens. If you are interested in learning more, visit [www.nctcog.org/txsmartscape](http://www.nctcog.org/txsmartscape).

## Useful Websites

- ★ Texas SmartScape website: [www.txsmartscape.com](http://www.txsmartscape.com)
- ★ For plant troubleshooting information and to find best landscape management practices to keep your Texas SmartScape landscape beautiful, visit the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension website at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>.
- ★ Master Gardeners can help answer your specific plant and garden questions. Contact them through your County Extension's office. See <http://county-tx.tamu.edu/>.
- ★ Learn more about stormwater pollution at [www.dfwstormwater.com/yardwaste](http://www.dfwstormwater.com/yardwaste).

Information gathered from Regional Stormwater Management Program participants ([www.dfwstormwater.com](http://www.dfwstormwater.com)), Texas AgriLife Extension (<http://texasextension.tamu.edu/>), and the EPA (<https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/pubs/outdoor.html>).

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