

Welcome

to the Conservation & Environmental Center
and Water Wise Demonstration Garden

Your one-stop shop for energy and water efficiency ideas

We're Glad You're Here

Colorado Springs Utilities is committed to working with customers to improve their energy and water efficiency—increasing the benefits of these resources to the community.



Why Efficiency?

Efficiency maximizes the value we get from our natural resources. By doing more with less, we delay or reduce costly infrastructure investments and help customers lower their bills while maintaining a high quality of life.

Conservation & Environmental Center Open weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Step inside to learn how to use energy and water wisely in your home through hands-on exhibits. From no-cost to the most cost-effective investments, we showcase the path to better home efficiency and comfort.

See it all in less than an hour.

Water Wise Demonstration Garden Public welcome year-round; staff available weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Explore the 2-acre demonstration garden and learn tips for using water more efficiently in your landscape. Be inspired with examples of water wise front yards in the Water Wise Neighborhood exhibit behind the building.

See it all in less than an hour.

Dig Deeper

Utilize the many resources Colorado Springs Utilities offers to help you make the best possible use of energy and water. Come inside or visit csu.org to learn more.

Connect With Us

719-668-8232 • csu.org



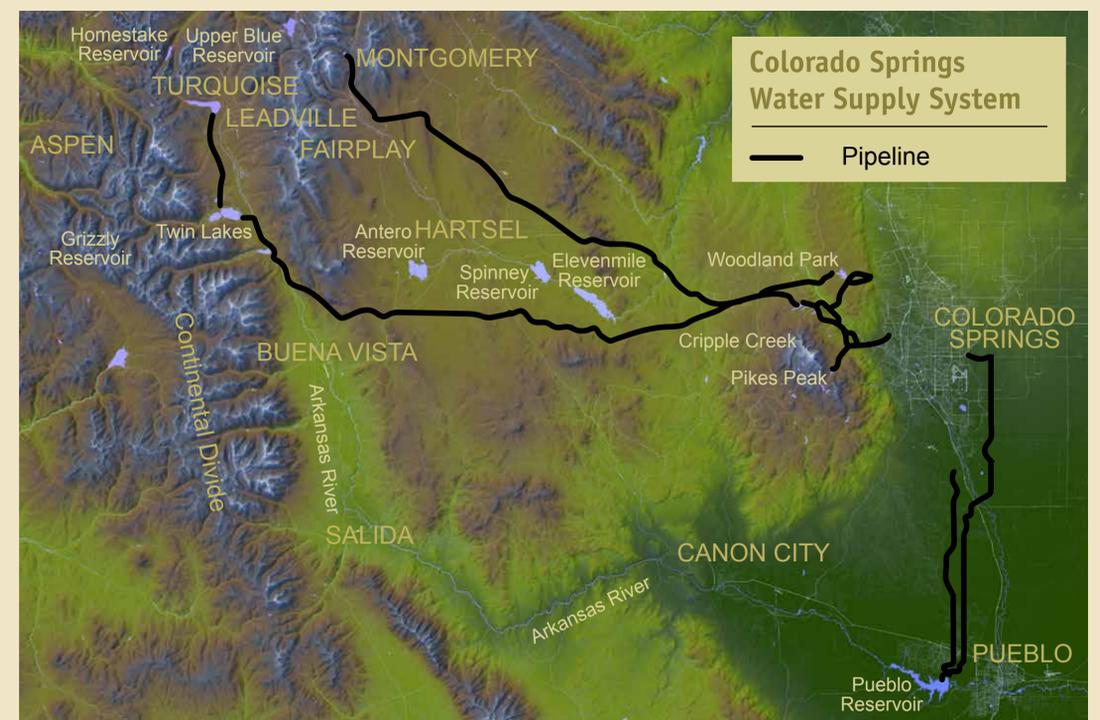
Colorado Springs Utilities
It's how we're all connected

Tracing the Source

of our water supply

From the snowy peaks of the Rocky Mountains to the faucet in your home, water travels up to 100 miles to get to our community.

Without a nearby river to transport water, Colorado Springs Utilities delivers snowmelt through an extensive system of pipes, pumps and reservoirs. Our homes, businesses and industries all rely on a stable and safe water supply.



SNOWMELT IS COLLECTED FROM THREE MAJOR RIVER BASINS TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITY.

Water in the West

In this semi-arid climate, water is a limited resource. As the population increases, so too must our work to manage the water we have. Water wise landscapes and technology in our homes are helping us use water more efficiently.

What steps are you taking to manage your water use?



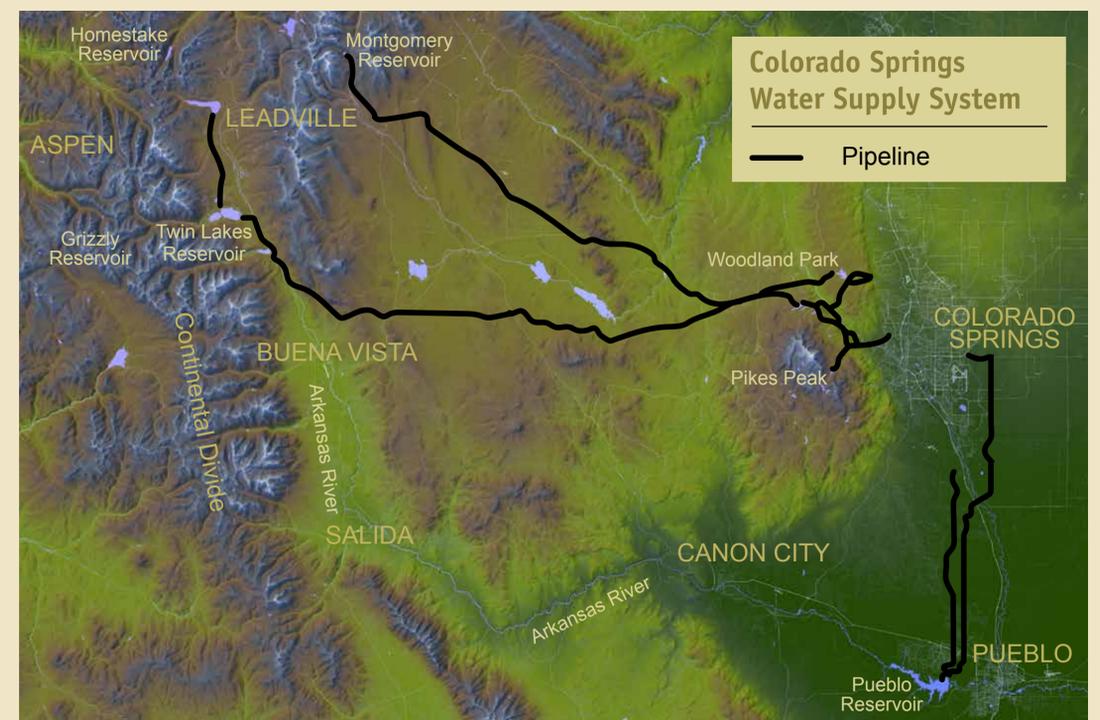
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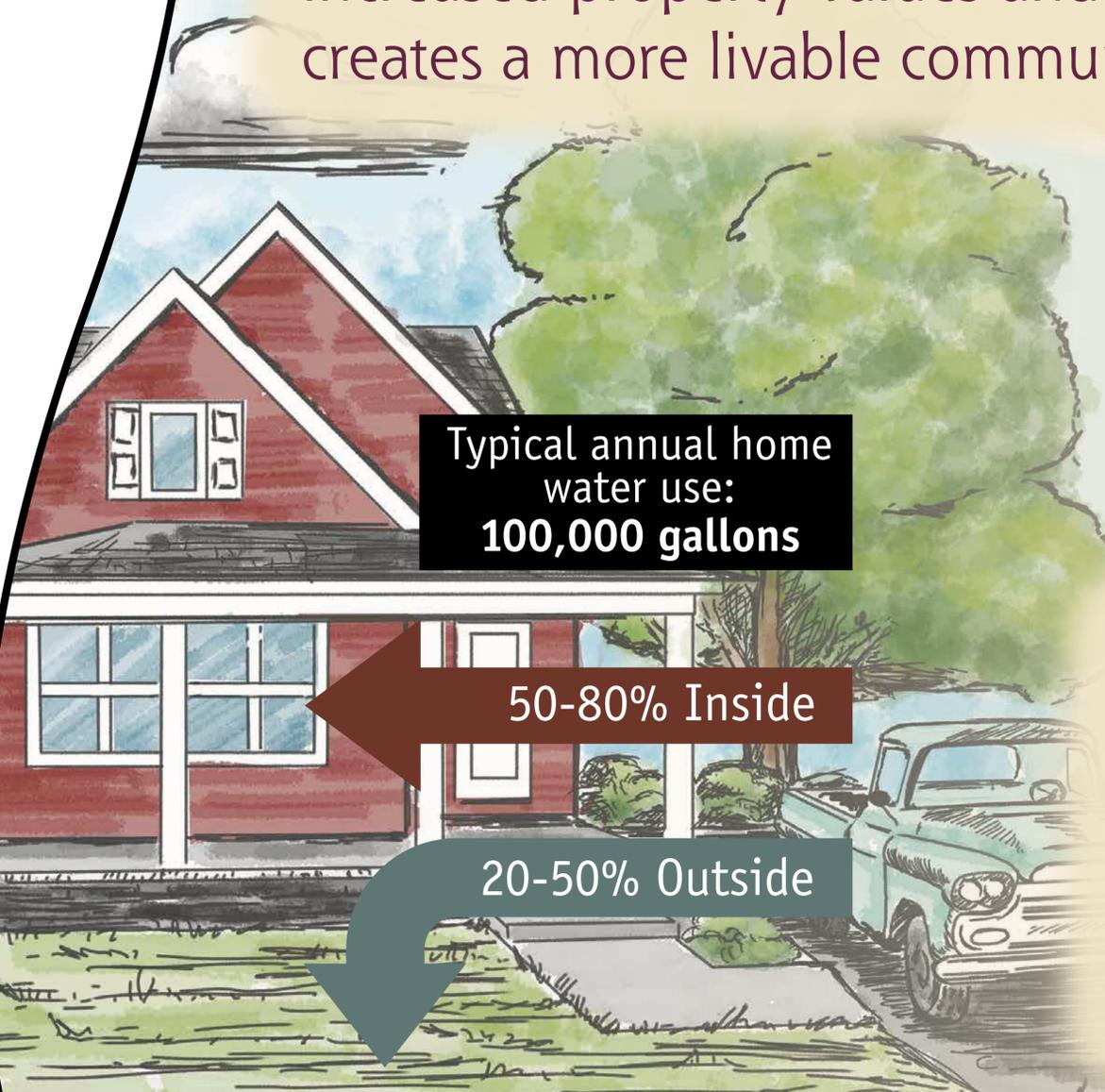
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Benefits of Landscaping

Water-smart landscaping is a worthy investment that pays off through increased property values and creates a more livable community.

Landscapes offer pleasing sights and smells, and improve our quality of life in many ways:

-  **Outdoor Living Space**—Landscapes provide pleasing places to enjoy Colorado’s fabulous climate.
-  **Increased Property Value**—Investing in landscaping is great for your wallet. For every dollar invested, homeowners gain a \$1.35 return in value on average. As the plants mature over time, their value increases too.
-  **Natural Cooling**—Well-placed trees can significantly reduce summer cooling costs. Shade from trees can reduce temperatures inside parked cars by 45 degrees.



Typical annual home water use:
100,000 gallons

50-80% Inside

20-50% Outside

Getting Water Wise

Watering a landscape is the biggest single use of water around the home, averaging between 20-50 percent of a typical Colorado Springs household’s monthly water bill. With water such a precious resource, it’s up to each of us to make the best and most efficient use of it.

Water wise practices are smart approaches to landscaping:

- Use the right plants
- Water efficiently
- Consider local soils and climate

How can you make your landscape more water wise?



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Know Your Site

Getting to know your site is the first step in creating a successful water wise landscape.

Evaluating your yard will help you identify opportunities and recognize limitations as you create a plan for your property. Start by considering the following:

-  Slope
-  Sun exposure
-  Wind exposure
-  Microclimates
-  Soil type
-  Elevation and cold-hardiness zone
-  Traffic patterns
-  Wildlife

Although landscaping in Colorado can be challenging, there's a solution for every limitation. Our resources can help you make use of existing features and plan for improvements.

Get Help

Colorado Springs Utilities has a wealth of landscape expertise to help you make sense of your yard. Step inside to discover our resources today.

What are the opportunities at your site?



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Design for a Purpose

When creating the ideal landscape, everyone brings different motives and various ideas about how it will look when finished.

You can design in a variety of styles and still have a water wise landscape.

Your goal may be to provide habitat for pollinators in a space great for outdoor entertaining, while others may be looking for a low maintenance facelift. Which of the following are most important to you?

-  Turf play area
-  Dog use area
-  Outdoor living/patio
-  Privacy
-  Shade
-  Low maintenance
-  Attract wildlife, birds and/or pollinators
-  Enhanced property value
-  Curb appeal

Stay Realistic

Every project requires an investment of time, money and research to create your ideal landscape. Consider installation costs, water needs and maintenance requirements when developing your landscape plan.

Visit waterwiseplants.org to see local examples of water wise landscapes.

How will you design your space?



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Choosing the Best Grass

A water wise landscape CAN include grass.

Some grass species use less water than others, while some hold up better to foot traffic. When selecting the type of grass to plant in your yard, think of its function first. Explore the different grass species growing in this garden, and consider which one might be best for your yard.

Turf Tips

Limit cool-season turf to areas where it will serve a specific purpose, such as accommodating high-traffic. Make sure to choose a flat area, limit lawn size, improve your soil before installation and use efficient irrigation methods.

Cool Season Grasses

Higher water use
Tolerate traffic better



Kentucky Blue Grass
Excellent traffic tolerance, provides a traditional look



Turf-type Tall Fescue
Good for lower-maintenance, traditional lawns



Fine Fescue
Shade tolerant, suitable for high elevations

Warm Season Grasses

Greatest water savings
Tolerate light traffic



Blue Grama
Resilient and long-lived, adaptable to many sites



Buffalograss
Less mowing, creates a solid groundcover



Native Grass Mixes
Suitable for natural and informal areas

Which grass will you choose?



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Select Durable Plants

With so many plants to choose from, selecting the best ones for your landscape may seem overwhelming.

Many water wise plants thrive in Colorado Springs. They offer beauty and vibrant color, and feature adaptations that help them thrive, even during periodic droughts. Whether you're looking for plants that provide shade, privacy, wind protection, fruit, or nectar and pollen for insects, you can find a low water plant to add to your water wise landscape.

Demonstration Garden

This water wise demonstration garden is a test site for new plant varieties featured by the Plant Select® program. A cooperative effort between Denver Botanic Gardens, Colorado State University, horticulturists and nurseries, this program identifies and distributes the best plants for landscapes and gardens in the intermountain region.



Sunset Hyssop
Fragrant orange and purple flowers attract hummingbirds



Hackberry
Resilient, water wise shade tree



Blonde Ambition Blue Grama Grass
Heat- and drought-tolerant native ornamental grass



Carol Mackie Daphne
Tidy, mounding mid-sized shrub, pink flowers in spring



Maximilian Sunflower
Beautiful spikes of yellow flowers in fall



Evergreens
Shrubs and trees add valuable winter interest



Pikes Peak Purple Penstemon
Adaptable, easy-to-grow perennial, comes back every year



Sensation Deep Blue Sage
Upright spikes of blue flowers, long-lasting bloom period

Visit waterwiseplants.org to view an online plant database and photo gallery to help you choose the best plants for your site.

Which plants in this garden are your favorites?



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The Right Mulch

protects your investment

A layer of mulch retains moisture and improves the soil.

By using mulch to cover bare soil in planting beds, you can reduce weeds, stabilize moisture and temperature levels, and create an ideal condition for roots to grow.

Mulching replicates the natural process performed by leaves and pine needles. As mulch breaks down over time, it helps build soil one layer at a time. Healthy soil is an important part of a resilient landscape.

Which Mulch to Use?

Mulches generally fall into two categories: products composed of either wood or bark, and those using rock or gravel. Choosing the right mulch depends on the characteristics of your site, selection of plants and the desired finished appearance of your landscape.



Wood Chips

Break down over time and enrich the soil, excellent at preventing new weeds, least expensive option



Mid-Size Gravel

Reflects heat, good choice for southwestern and Mediterranean plants



Shredded Wood

More wind-resistant than wood chips, excellent at preventing new weeds



Small Gravel

Suitable around small plants and groundcovers, excellent for rock gardens

For the best soil and plant health, avoid using landscape fabric in planted areas. It can interfere with air and water movement over time.

Which mulches are right for your landscape?



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Water Efficiently

Watering the right amount at the right time is the key to a water wise landscape.

Water wise irrigation strikes a balance between watering enough, while minimizing waste due to overwatering and runoff. Water only when your plants need it, and target their root zone.



Key Components of an Efficient Irrigation System

Automatic sprinkler systems make watering easy. Use the best components and technology to make your system as efficient as possible. Check it regularly for leaks and breaks, and repair as needed.



Drip Irrigation

The most efficient way to water shrubs and planting beds, reduces evaporation and runoff



Rain Sensor

Automatically turns off the sprinkler system during a rainstorm, reducing needless watering



Smart Controller

Lessens overwatering by running the sprinkler system based on local weather conditions and plants' water needs



Efficient Heads and Nozzles

Work significantly better than older models and decrease water waste

Look for irrigation products with the EPA WaterSense label.



Rain sensor and sprinkler nozzle photos courtesy of Hunter Industries. Smart controller photo courtesy of Rain Bird Corporation.

How can you create a more water efficient landscape?



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Maintenance Required

All landscapes, water wise or not, require regular maintenance.

Plants need regular attention to remain healthy and attractive over the long term. Take the following actions to help your landscape look its best:



Install an irrigation system

Streamline your watering by installing a high-efficiency irrigation system. Water less often in the cool months of spring and fall to maximize savings.

Replenish mulch periodically

Over time, mulch breaks down. Adding more mulch every 1-2 years minimizes weeds and ensures your plants will grow their best.

Cut back perennials and grasses at the right time of year

Remove last year's dead growth in late winter or early spring, so new growth can flourish.

Prune trees and shrubs for long-term health

Woody plants are the most valuable plants in the landscape. Learn how and when to prune them for their best appearance and well-being.

Control weeds regularly

Create a plan to consistently remove them. By reducing the number of weeds, your landscape will remain healthier and flourish for a longer time.

What's your maintenance plan?



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