

**You can have Beautiful
Flowers and Still
Conserve Water**



**WESTERN
WATER**



Flowers provide a lovely splash of colour through the spring and summer months, and can be used to brighten up any garden. Though they are generally considered to need a lot of water, you can grow them in a WaterWise garden if you follow these basic principles.

Prepare Your Flower Bed to Minimise Water Usage

Australian soils are naturally deficient in organic matter; which means they can't hold adequate amounts of either water or nutrients.

Taking the effort to improve the organic matter of your soil will bring enormous benefits to your garden. It will:

- Improve plant growth;
- Reduce fertiliser use;
- Reduce water use; and
- Decrease garden maintenance.

Organic matter can be added in many ways. You can:

- Make your own by composting household waste; or
- Purchase it from your local nursery in many different forms including peat and manure.

Soil additives such as soil wetting agents will also help your soil to hold water more effectively.

Mulch Your Garden Bed

The Australian climate is one of the harshest in the world. Bare soil exposed to the sun loses nutrients and water at a rapid rate. The application of a thick layer of mulch will help to:

- Retain moisture;
- Discourage weed growth; and
- Prevent soil erosion.

Organic mulches have the additional advantage of breaking down over time, and feeding the soil and your plants.

To prepare your flower bed:

- Improve your soil;
- Mulch the whole area first; and
- Scrape away small areas to plant your seedlings.

Note: Beds containing tall bedding plants should be mulched to a depth of 75mm. For lower or spreading plants the mulch should be 50mm thick.

Plan Before You Plant

When planting your flower bed choose a water efficient flower from the list below and group your flowering plants together in a suitable area which can be watered independently from other areas of the garden.

Not all flowers have the same water requirements, so try to group flowers with similar needs together. Your local nursery industry professional can advise on the water needs of different types of plants.

Choosing the Right Flowers

When gardening in Australia, we should always remember that our climate is probably one of the harshest on earth. For this reason, we need to choose flowers and plants which can flourish in these conditions.

Some flowers which are suitable for Australian conditions include:

- Alyssum
- Carnations
- Coreopsis
- Dimorphotheca
- Pimelea
- Wild Rosemary
- Gazania
- Geranium
- Marigold
- Pelargonium
- Verbena
- Salmon Correa
- Arctosis
- Celosia
- Cockscomb
- Gerbera
- Petunia
- Creeping Boobialla
- Vinca
- Portulaca
- Assorta 'winter pink'



- Callistemon Little John
- Marguerite Daisy
- Shasta Daisy
- Gaillardia
- Clustered Everlasting
- Mesembryanthemum
- Fringed Heath Myrtle

These plants can be grown in full sun and will perform well with a watering every second day. Some may show slight wilting during very hot days, but should make a good recovery once the heat has passed.

Remember that all flowers will perform better if the guidelines about soil, mulches and watering are followed.

Watering Your Flower Beds

Micro-irrigation is the most water-efficient means of watering a flower bed. A low volume spray or soaker hose can be used to cover the area. Two important things to note:

- Cover your irrigation lines with mulch to improve appearances and keep pipes cool; and
- Water at night or in the early morning to reduce evaporation loss.

Fertilising Your Flower Beds

Don't attempt to force the plants on with large amounts of strong fertilisers. This will only produce lush growth which has a higher water transpiration rate and is more prone to insect and fungal attack.

Manures are excellent fertilisers for flower beds, when used in moderation, because of their slow release action and high organic matter content. Some animal manures are rich in nitrogen which stimulates leaf growth. These manures may need supplementing with a general purpose fertiliser.

Victorian gardeners use 406,800,000 litres of water a day

The “WaterWise in the Garden” initiative has been introduced to help gardeners reduce their water consumption.

The Benefits of Being WaterWise

There are three major benefits to being WaterWise in your garden:

A WaterWise Gardener will Save Money ...

When we save water, we save money. By applying the “WaterWise in the Garden” ideas, you have the potential to cut your outdoor water use by up to 50% whilst still maintaining a green, pleasant and rewarding garden.

A WaterWise Garden is a Low Maintenance Garden ...

With smaller lawn areas, clever use of mulching and landscaping and a well designed irrigation system, WaterWise gardens are a *lot less work* than conventional gardens.

A WaterWise Garden is more natural and helps to save our environment ...

A WaterWise Gardener helps save our environment by:

- Reducing use of fertilisers and chemicals.
- Reducing water run-off to the stormwater system (which runs straight into our waterways).
- Helping to delay the need for further dams.

**WaterWise Gardening ...
Benefiting the Individual
and the Community**

WaterWise Gardening

Saves Water
Saves Work
Saves Money and
Saves Our Environment

Want More Information?

The “WaterWise in the Garden” initiative is designed to help gardeners by providing expert information on how to maintain a high quality garden but at the same time conserve water. Western Water and the Nursery Industry Association of Victoria are eager to help Victorian gardeners to be WaterWise.

For further advice, information and practical assistance on water conservation in the garden, speak to your local nursery industry professional or call:

Western Water
1300 650 425



Nursery Industry
Association of
Victoria
(03) 9576 0599



Brochures available in this series

- WaterWise Watering & Irrigation Systems
 - Successful Pot Plants Using Less Water
- How to Identify Water Efficient Plants at a Glance
- You Can Have Beautiful Flowers and Still Conserve Water
 - Saving Water and Money with Your Existing Lawn
 - Water Efficient Shrubs

Western Water
www.westernwater.com.au