

## Choosy People Choose Desert Plants

A beautiful and inviting landscape can be a welcome escape from our often hectic lives, which is why choosy people choose desert plants.

Installing and maintaining a desert landscape with a balanced design, intriguing scents and textures, and year-round color may seem like a daunting and pricey task. However, with a little research, lots of commitment, and a pinch of patience, you can install and maintain a low-water-use landscape that is not only aesthetically pleasing, but time- and money-saving, and of course low water use.

Why choose low water-use landscaping? There are numerous advantages of low-water-use landscaping, including:

- Using less water on landscaping saves money
- Plants can handle Arizona's alkaline soils without the need for extra fertilizer
- A variety of plant colors, forms and textures to choose from
- Plants grow stronger and look healthier than their high-water-use counter parts



Before purchasing plants for your landscape, be sure to choose the right plant for the right place. Consider the following:

- Sun exposure and shade
- Match mature size of plant to space available
- Group plants with similar water needs
- Plant characteristics, i.e. thorns near sidewalks
- Bloom time for year-round color

Make a list of your favorite plants and call your local nurseries to be sure they have the plants in stock. Remember that some plants may be seasonally stocked, and do not be afraid to ask the nursery to order the plants for you.

### Choosing Plants:

Remember these tips on plant selection:

- Bigger is not always better. Plants in smaller containers will rapidly catch up to their larger, more expensive counterparts.
- Select plants that have fleshy white roots. Make sure there are no circling roots or roots coming out of the bottom of the container.
- Be sure there is nothing growing on the surface of the soil, such as weeds or mold.
- Inspect the stems or trunk for any injuries.
- Take an overall look at the plant and make sure the leaves do not look discolored or drought stressed.

**Here are some great resources to help you choose plants and design a landscape.**

- Take a look at [Water Wise Landscaping in Chandler](#), an interactive guide to desert adapted plants as well as design ideas.
- Another handy tool is Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert, a free publication produced by the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association (AMWUA) and available at most nurseries, at our Water Conservation office and online at <http://www.amwua.org/plants>. It can be ordered online at <http://www.chandleraz.gov/default.aspx?pageid=713> or email [conserve@chandleraz.gov](mailto:conserve@chandleraz.gov) to request your free copy. This brochure contains more than 200 low water-use plants with sections devoted to trees, shrubs, groundcovers, vines, grasses, cacti, succulents and annual and perennial wildflowers. Colorful photographs accompany almost every plant, while an informational chart compares characteristics like drought and heat tolerance, leaf structure, bloom color and mature size.
- Download the [Plant Reference Guide](#) (PDF)

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