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# Garden In A Box

2020 Plant & Care Guide

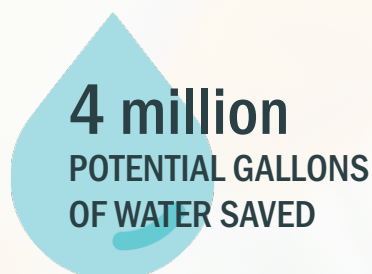


# CONGRATS ON YOUR NEW WATERWISE GARDEN

You've now joined thousands of Front Range families working to reduce their water usage in a beautiful way with Garden In A Box. Continue inside for tips on watering and caring for your plants during their first year and beyond. These professionally designed garden kits are tailor-made for Colorado yards, and include: locally grown and pollinator friendly xeric and veggie starter plants, easy to follow plant by number maps, and this comprehensive guide for all of your planting, watering and maintenance needs. Happy planting!

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## 2019 WATER CONSERVATION IMPACT



### NEED MORE INFO?

**Refer to your Garden Info Sheet(s)** for plant-specific maintenance tips.

**Refer to our online Garden Resources page** for quick tips on all things waterwise gardening at [ResourceCentral.org/gardens/garden-in-a-box-resources](https://ResourceCentral.org/gardens/garden-in-a-box-resources).

**Email us at [gardeninfo@resourcecentral.org](mailto:gardeninfo@resourcecentral.org) or call us at 303-999-3820 x222** with any other questions.

# Preparing & Planting Your Garden



**PREP** - Before planting your Garden In A Box, remove any weeds within the planting area and if desired, till and amend the soil with an organic compost. Keep in mind that these plants are either native, or non-native adapted, meaning that they are well suited for our Colorado soil so don't over do it with the compost. Less is more when amending soil for xeric plants!

It is best to **plant within 2 weeks of receiving your garden**, weather permitting. If a frost is forecasted, wait to plant. Store your plants in an area with some sunlight and water daily. When you plant, do so in the early morning or late afternoon to avoid peak temps!

**tip**



**PLAN** - Before digging, make note of any existing sprinkler lines to avoid\*. Then, lay out your plant starts (still in their containers) in your desired planting area and follow the plant by number map (not included with the Xeric Greatest Hits gardens). To accommodate each plant's mature height and spread, space each plant start about 1.5x the spread of the plant when mature. Mature spread can be found on the individual garden insert.

\*Consider your watering method at this point. Perhaps you need to convert your existing sprinkler system to drip. Either way, your new plants will need MUCH less water than grass.

**tip**



**PLANT** - Dig holes the same depth and about 2x the diameter of the plant start. Hold the plant sideways and gently squeeze the container to release the plant. Break up the plant's roots to encourage them to grow down and outwards. Place the plant in the hole, fill the hole about 1/3 way with planting mix, and top it off with enough water to allow the mix to settle. Fill the remainder of the hole to the base of the plant with soil and water thoroughly.

Don't judge your plant only by its foliage! After some time in a pot, the plant's foliage may show signs of distress, which is normal. **A good root mass is the best judge of "character"**. The roots are typically creamy white or tan and the root tips, if visible, should be white.

**tip**



**PROTECT** - Once your plants are in the ground, it's time to mulch! Mulching is essential; it minimizes evaporation, reduces weeds, and much more. We recommend wood chips for perennial gardens. Apply 2-4" of organic mulch over bare soil, and keep the crown of the plants (area where the stem of the plant meets the soil, about a 4" in diameter) free of mulch. Then, give your garden a thorough watering. Great job on planting your garden!

## The Basics: Plant Growth



### 1<sup>st</sup> YEAR THEY SLEEP

During the 1<sup>st</sup> year, proper care is vital to make your plants resilient. They are establishing their extensive root system and will **require watering at least 2x per week**.



### 2<sup>nd</sup> YEAR THEY CREEP

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, the plant roots are growing stronger and larger, and you may notice more foliage and blooms. **Cut watering by half** as compared to the 1<sup>st</sup> year.



### 3<sup>rd</sup> YEAR THEY LEAP

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, the plants are typically fully established and producing beautiful blooms. **Cut watering by half again** as compared to the 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

## The Basics: Watering Requirements

To establish a baseline watering schedule for your new garden, use the following suggestions for the average watering needs of a xeric garden. The times below are based on **1/2 gallon per hour drip emitters**. We strongly recommend using a drip system for efficiency and plant health.

	1 <sup>st</sup> YEAR	2 <sup>nd</sup> YEAR	3 <sup>rd</sup> YEAR
PEAK SEASON	30-60 mins. 2x per week	30-60 mins. 1x per week	30-60 mins. 1x every 1-2 weeks
SHOULDER SEASONS	30-60 mins. 1x per week	30-60 mins. 1x every 2 weeks	30-60 mins. 1x every 2-4 weeks

Generally, “**peak season**” is June through mid-September. The “**shoulder seasons**”, in this case, are April through May and mid-September through October. That being said, every year is slightly different, so we recommend monitoring the weather and average temperatures rather than strictly adhering to a month-based schedule. When in doubt follow the Watering Guidelines on next page.



# Watering Guidelines

**1) Visually inspect plants before planting.** When your starter plant is still in its container, check to make sure the soil is moist. If the soil is dry or the leaves look wilted, then keep the plant in its container, place it plant in the shade, and water it thoroughly and routinely until the foliage has perked back up. Now it's time to plant!

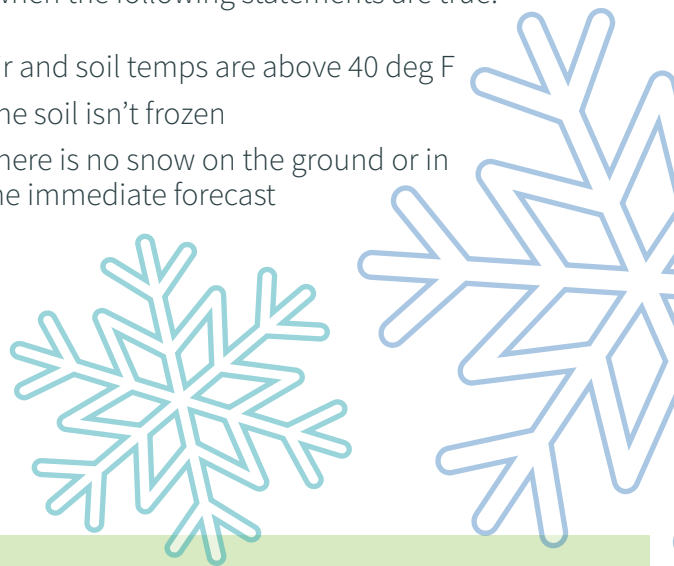
**2) Once in the ground, closely monitor soil moisture and plant appearance.** Stick your finger into the soil (near base of the plant) about 6 inches. If it's dry and the plant looks wilted, then give the plant water. If the soil is moist and the plant looks perky, then no need to water right now! If the soil is moist and the plant looks wilted, then it is getting too much water and you should adjust your watering schedule.

**3) Mulch your garden!** Mulch will retain the moisture in the soil, and in turn, it will help keep your plants well hydrated.

## Tips on fall & winter watering:

The high winds, low precipitation, low humidity, and large temperature swings of the Front Range during late fall into early spring can wreak havoc on younger plants. *Here's the skinny* - water only when the following statements are true:

1. Air and soil temps are above 40 deg F
2. The soil isn't frozen
3. There is no snow on the ground or in the immediate forecast



# Maintenance Guidelines



**NOTE:** Refer to your individual garden info sheet(s) for specific care instructions on each plant.



## Maintenance terms to know

**Pruning:** the removal of dead or overgrown branches and/or stems.

**Deadheading:** the removal of faded/spent or dead flowers and often the top few inches of growth beneath the blossom.

**Weeding:** the removal of unwanted or unneeded plants.

**Cutting Back:** cutting down plant stalks usually to achieve the desired plant shape or size, or to cause a second flush of growth. This is usually followed by a qualifier like "Cut back by half" meaning you cut the tops of the plant down to ½ it's original height.

**Side Dressing:** a method of providing fertilizer or compost to a plant by digging a small trench (a couple of inches) at least 6 inches away from the main stalk/root ball of the plant.

**Tilling:** the method of turning over and breaking up the soil.



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**We love to talk about gardens!**  
**Reach out to us with any Garden In A Box questions.**  
**303-999-3820 x222**