Landscaping with less water...

Creating a beautiful garden that needs less water is both possible and extremely satisfying. Worldwide, a growing appreciation of water as a precious resource is bringing a new perspective to landscaping.

Central Otago is no different. We are becoming more aware of the cost of using treated drinking water on lawns and gardens, particularly with the introduction of water meters.

Using less water does not mean sacrificing a beautiful garden. We can reduce our water consumption by using water more efficiently.

Ways to use less water in the garden...

Choose plants which flourish with less water
- see reverse for a list of suitable plants.

Plant trees in shallow basins to collect water and prevent runoff.

Have less lawn or try going ‘lawnless’.

Group plants in zones according to water needs - more water for the vegetable garden.

Manage weeds - weeds use water... move them on!

Use dripper irrigation and avoid wetting pavements and hard surfaces.

Use a timer to avoid watering longer than you need.

Reduce your lawn's drinking habit by trying the ‘tuna can test’ to measure the hourly output of your irrigation system, then adjust your timings to apply 40mm of water per week, including any rainfall.

1. Place four empty 95gm tuna cans at spots around your lawn - some close to the sprinkler and some further away.
2. Turn the sprinklers on for 15 minutes.
3. Measure the water collected in each can.
4. If the cans are empty or too full, adjust the sprinkler to get a more even cover.
5. Work out how long it takes to give your lawn half its weekly dose (20mm in summer) and then you know how long to leave the irrigation on.
6. Give your lawn 20mm of water twice a week in summer.

A huge range of plants from around the world can be used to create colourful, textural and resilient gardens that suit our Central Otago climate.

Central Otago District Council

For further information or advice contact:

Jo Wakelin
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A guide to landscaping with less water in Central Otago
**Water Smart Plants**

**Which Plants are Suitable?**

A rich array of plants from around the world are adapted to dry climates like ours. Many local native species are also well suited to our climate.

The plants shown here are just a small selection of plants with very low water needs. As microclimates vary widely in Central Otago and within individual gardens, not every plant will be appropriate for every site.

Visit the Cromwell Water Conservation Garden in Waenga Drive and read the Cromwell Water Conservation Garden brochure on Council’s website for more plant lists and ideas.

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**Sedum ‘Matrona’**

This large upright stonecrop, with its large, grey blue leaves tinged with a purple flush, is as handsome in leaf as it is in bloom. Does especially well in full sun and dry soils.

**Rosa ‘Mutabilis’**

An incredibly tough rose, Mutabilis does really well with less water. Nearly impervious to disease, it blooms continuously from spring until autumn. Rugosa roses are also worth a try.

**Perovskia atriplicifolia**

This plant forms a bushy, upright clump of silvery stems. Spikes of violet-blue flowers appear in late summer. Russian sage flourishes in hot, sunny dry sites.

**Cistus x skanbergii**

A low dense shrub with soft grey-green foliage and delicate, tissue like, pale pink flowers. Cistus revel in our hot Central sun. Overhead irrigation will kill this plant.

**Arbutus unedo**

**Strawberry Tree**

This evergreen tree has neatly serrated leathery leaves and a refined shape. By late autumn clusters of creamy flowers and red fruits appear.

**Gaura lindheimeri**

**Whirling Butterflies**

This fresh, pretty plant flowers from spring until autumn. Rugosa roses are also worth a try.

**Tulipa ‘Spring Green’**

Tulip

Like many bulbs, tulips complete their growth cycle before our dry summer. They enjoy dry soil around their bulbs when dormant. What beauty!

**Salvia ‘Lubeca’**

**Sage**

This salvia produces electric violet-purple flowers on erect spikes over a long period in summer. There are many sages suited to Central Otago.

**Lavandula angustifolia**

**Lavandula x intermedia**

**Lavender**

There are many cultivars of these well-known, dry loving plants. All need full sun and one hard trim after flowering. Wonderful scent and bee attractant.

**Grevillea ‘Scarlet Sprite’**

**Grevillea**

An ‘ever-silver’ native shrub. Grows and in late summer the misty blue flowers attract bumble bees by the dozens.

**Caryopteris x clandonensis**

**Bluebeard**

This smaller shrub is easy to grow and in late summer the tiny blue flowers attract bumble bees by the dozens.

**Vitis amurensis**

**Ornamental Grapevine**

This wonderful vine is superb for pergolas! It does not produce fruit so wasps are not attracted. Green leaves turn to stunning claret in autumn.

**Iris germanica**

**Bearded Iris**

Iris do incredibly well in Central Otago, and with such a range of colours and heights, there is a bearded iris for any garden.

**Narcissus**

**Daffodils**

There is a huge range and variety of daffodils available to provide those spring blooms. The bulbs evade the dry times by becoming dormant in summer. Plant in autumn.

**Helianthemum spp.**

**Rock Rose**

A cousin of the cistus, the rock roses form delightful, small, evergreen mounds in dry sunny sites. Colours range from hot orange to red, pinks, yellow and white.

**Muehlenbeckia astonii**

**Daisy Bush**


**Kowhai**

**Sophora microphylla**

These tough native trees once grew much more widely in Central Otago. The early spring flowers bring bellbirds with their exquisite song to the garden.