



# NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

## Create a Water-Wise Yard, Part 2 (August 12, 2023)

By Sue Schieferle, Tulare-Kings Counties Master Gardener

\*This is part two of a two-part series on creating a water-wise yard.

We did it! We made the (easy) decision to say goodbye to our front lawn forever! You can do it, too!

**Sod Cutting Method:** We chose this quicker method and began one week before lawn removal by spraying the lawn with glyphosate, an herbicide. We dug around the sprinkler heads, flagged them, and capped off the ones we did not want to use [FYI, we capped off 14 out of 19!]. Using a gas-powered sod-cutting machine, we cut the lawn lengthwise and crosswise, creating squares that were easy to pick up and dispose of into extra green waste cans we rented.



**Raking and Leveling** is a tedious but critical task to remove leftover dead grass and weeds and level the remaining soil. Next, we sprayed the entire area with a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent germination or survival of weed seedlings. Make sure this herbicide saturates and covers the entire area.

**Irrigation Changeover** involved taking existing uncapped risers, converting them to pressure regulating hose line feeds with a 90-degree elbow, to a threaded reducer, and to a 25-pound pressure regulator and hose connector. Next, lines of hose were laid out along the planting area, and spaghetti tubing was run from the hose to the plant holes. Test the irrigation now.

**The placement of boulders, trees, and plants** was marked using marking spray paint. Boulders were set in place. We also extended our original conventional flowerbed using 4-inch river rocks to make a curvy, more appealing border. We used the same rocks to line our curbside strip to complement this flowerbed.

**Holes for plants** were dug about three times as wide and deep as the plant roots since our site has clay soil that does not drain well. If you have better quality loam soil, dig the holes twice as wide and deep as the root ball. Mix in some soil amendment with your existing soil.

**Landscape fabric, also known as weed cloth,** was laid over the entire area, cutting crisscross slits in the fabric over the planting holes. Even though we used a weed killer on the lawn and a pre-emergent on the topsoil, we made the decision to cover our plot with a tightly woven landscape fabric to block sunlight and help deter future weeds.



**The placement** of permeable hardscape came next. We used flagstone stepping stones to make a path through our yard and curbside strip. The sand underneath the stones leveled them.

**Planting** was the fun part! After planting was complete, we installed emitters on the spaghetti tubing and tested the drip irrigation again.



**Mulching** was next. We chose humus, an organic matter in a highly decayed state which can provide nutrients to plants and look more aesthetically pleasing until the ground cover takes over.

**DONE** and YEAH! Sit back and relax and enjoy your new water-wise landscape. Every year will bring more color and depth to your yard as the plants flourish.

**Plants** that we used around our three boulders were salvias and penstemons in pink, purple, and white. These wispy perennials provide color from spring to fall and again in years to come! We planted a mini crape myrtle (deep pink) which can be trained in a topiary shape. Around a big electrical box, we planted Texas Sage, a very water-wise shrub with tiny lavender flowers, which will eventually conceal the box from our garden view. For groundcover, we selected Succulent Sedum *Tricolor* (with pink blooms) and *Dragon's Blood* (with burgundy blooms) for an interesting color mix. A lacy Gaura called the wand flower, welcomes visitors to our yard. Up the driveway, the Gaillardia, or blanket flower, says hello, please come in!

**The Tulare-Kings Counties Master Gardeners will answer your questions in person:**

Visalia Farmer's Market – canceled until September 9 due to the market moving to a new location.

Hanford Farmer's Market – 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday, May-Sept, 5:30 – 9:00 pm, 219 W. Lacey, Hanford

**Questions? Call the Master Gardeners:**

Tulare County: (559) 684-3325, Tues & Thurs, 9:30-11:30;

Kings County: (559) 852-2736, Thursday Only, 9:30–11:30 am

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