

Kass' Xeric Garden Tips & more...

(for Colorado & the Southwest)

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The Goal...

is to create a self-sustaining landscape that compliments your home as well as fits into the Colorado climate (High Desert). With some work from you in the beginning, then just a little bit of maintenance every spring, you can be on your way to an all-but-maintenance-free natural landscape.

Healthy Plants depend on the combination of air, nutrients, water and sunlight.

Air means the air around the plant as well as the air between the roots provided by well-drained planting material.

Nutrients come from the decomposing organic matter in your mulch and/or composted soil

Water & Sunlight come from Mother Nature (with a little water help from you in the beginning and during very dry heat waves) if you have planned right for this climate.

In no particular order...

1. Water regularly the first year to establish new planting (Xeriscape or not). You can then wean the plants off the regular water the following year and by year 3 do minimal watering.
2. Keep mulch from 2-4 inches in depth to prevent weed growth and shade roots for moisture retention. Don't push it right up to the crown of the plant or you'll choke it off. More than 4" deep gets mold.
3. Plant "like water needs" together so you don't overwater some and underwater others.
4. Always amend your soil in Colorado with compost. It has the bacterial microbes that feed and nurture the plants.
5. Don't fertilize after initial planting (ie: Miracle Grow) or this makes the plant think it's on crack cocaine and it will never become independent of the fertilizer (you want to grow deep drought-resistant roots).
6. Always water deep and slow for a long period of time less often (as opposed to a little bit of water each day) to give the roots the signal to go deep and penetrate to get water.
7. If you want any kind of plant material in the area, never use landscape fabric. It prevents the mulch from getting to your original yukky soil and amending it into good soil. It also makes the roots grow up into the fabric to get to the mulch that is breaking down into compost.* Save landscape fabric for rock mulch and junipers only on a slope.
8. Trim dead perennial tops back in EARLY spring to allow for new growth. Do not trim Russian Sage until you see where new growth is and old death growth needs pruning. Do not trim evergreen plants like Avena Oat grass or it will keep the "Butched" look, just "rake" it out with your gloved hands.
9. Select deer-resistant plants for your home in the foothills & mountains.

*Good compost is organic matter broken down into a rich black loamy soil that does not stink, but gives off a rich earthy smell. This is Mother Nature's "Black Gold."

Research Phase...

HIGH COUNTRY GARDENS—JUST DO IT!

Get on the mailing list for the [High Country Gardens Catalog & Handbook](#). The standard for the Xeriscape plant industry. Use their [FREE](#) catalog as your bible and guide in Xeriscaping. Also sign up for their free online Xeriscaping newsletter.

800/925-9387 • <http://www.highcountrygardens.com/>

Colorado Springs Utilities XERISCAPE DEMONSTRATION GARDEN

Utilize the free Colorado Springs Xeriscape Demonstration Garden on Mesa Road (under the water tower!)! The 1.75 acre Colorado Springs Utilities Xeriscape Demonstration Garden is accessible via I-25 exit 145 (Fillmore). Go West to Mesa Road. North to 225 Mesa Road. This garden has been cited as "A Significant Garden in the United States" by The Smithsonian Institution, and is the subject of a future 2-hour PBS television special. Open 365 days a year, it is the model for other Xeriscape demonstration gardens in the southwest, and a valuable local resource. It also beautifully frames a view envied by the entire country! They have all the CSU fact sheets available and offer free seminars. Their website has a great database of xeric plants.

"No Water" Xeriscape! CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN ZOO

Visit the Zoo's parking lot and their website to learn more about "NO WATER" gardening. <http://www.cmzoo.org/nowatergarden.html> (plant lists, how to's, etc) Excellent way to establish a garden you don't want to mess with! Or somewhere where it's difficult for you to get water to!

CALL FOR THESE CATALOGS NOW!!!

HIGH COUNTRY GARDENS • <http://www.highcountrygardens.com/>

The "Bible" of Xeriscaping. Free catalog/handbook is GREAT info/image resource. Never go shopping without it! Also sign up for their free online Xeriscaping newsletter. 800/925-9387

PLANTS OF THE SOUTHWEST • <http://www.plantsofthesouthwest.com/>

800/788-7333

WILDSEED FARMS • <http://www.wildseedfarms.com/>

Wildflower seed for your area. Quality providers, complete instructions online and in catalog. Don't buy that "meadow in a can" (crap) at your local garden/home improvement center or discount store. 800/848-0078

DRIPOWORKS USA • <http://www.dripworksusa.com/>

Dripworks drip irrigation supplies, suppliers to the pros. Articles on website, tips in catalog—use quality parts at direct prices! 800/522-3747

ORNAMENTAL GRASS FACTS

Spreading Grasses • Clumpers vs Runners Warm vs Cool Season Growers • And more...

Many people assume all Ornamental Grasses spread rampantly. This is false. The White-Plumed Pampas Grass of California has contributed to this myth.

1. Many ornamental grasses are sterile and cannot reproduce from their own seed.
2. Clumping grasses do not spread—they grow only in a clump/bunch. The clump may get bigger, but it does not spread, unless by fertile seed under ideal conditions.
3. Running grasses can spread and some are rampant spreaders (like Ribbon Grass)—contain these within sunken containers or edging.
4. Grasses are either cool or warm season growers...
5. Warm season growers are dormant in Spring and Fall, but really "kick in" to growing during hot summer months.
6. Cool season growers are most active in Spring and sometimes again in Fall, but go dormant (not dying, but stop active growth) for self preservation during the hot months.
7. Ornamental grasses have few, if any, pest problems. (Other than my cat!) They normally (never say never) need no disease or pesticide control. They are one of the most carefree, easy-to-grow plants you will ever find.
8. Like any planting, not just shade or sun considerations, but be sure to group like-water needs together. Low water grasses should be grouped with the same needs in their nearby companion plants.
9. Bamboos and sedges are all part of the larger Grass family.
10. Many grasses stand erect for the winter to offer seasonal interest. They are gorgeous with snow atop them (and even with twinkling lights!).
11. Care: Leave grasses until early spring. In late February or March, cut back the dead dried tops to make room for the new shoots to emerge. Cut back to a few inches above the crown of the plant. Carefully "rake" the shorn debris out of the crown with your gloved fingers (dried grass blades can be sharp) or a hand rake. On evergreen grasses like Helictotrichon, don't cut it off, "rake" out the dried dead grass with your gloved fingers. (Sueded gloves work well to carefully grasp dead grass blades).
12. Care: As clumping grasses get older, the center will die out. This is when you need to divide the clump. Dig it out in the early spring, divide it with a shovel & garden fork, then replant the new divisions (compost the old dead center).

As with any plant, water regularly to establish the first year or more. Then you can wean back the water to fit the profile of the specific plant.

Grasses make excellent background, foreground, border, specimen and companion plants with other perennials and annuals. My garden is designed to be a grass-only at my choice. I designed a somewhat formal layout as a juxtaposition to the obvious informal characteristics of ornamental grasses.

**CALL BEFORE YOU DIG: 1-800-922-1987
IT'S THE LAW!**

My Favorites — The Book List

Shop for used books online to get a better deal! I buy used books from Amazon.com all the time! Go for it!

Numbered in order of preference...

XERISCAPE

1. **Xeriscape Colorado** by David Winger & Connie Ellefson, Westcliffe Publishers, 2004
2. **The Xeriscape Flower Gardener** by Jim Knopf, Johnson Books, 1991.
3. **Waterwise Landscaping** by Jim Knopf, Chamisa Books, 1999.
4. **Xeriscape Plant Guide** by Denver Water, edited by David Winger, Fulcrum Publishing, 1996.
5. **The Rocky Mountain Perennial Plant Guide** (1995) and **Rocky Mountain Plant Guide** (1993), Colorado Nursery Association. (Available through most Front Range Nurseries) These two booklets are aka: The CNA Blue Book & the CNA Red Book, respectively.
6. **Taylor Guide to Ornamental Grasses** Houghton Mifflin Co, 1997.

ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

1. **Taylor's Guide to Ornamental Grasses** by Taylor Guides, ISBN: 0-395-79761-6; \$21.00 (An older book, but many, many plant varieties crammed into this one. As this book ages, the next book makes a good supplement to this one.)
2. **The Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses** by John Greenlee, ISBN: 0-87596-100-2
3. **The Color Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses** by Rick Darke, ISBN: 0-88192-464-4; \$49.95
A nice 'coffee table' style book with beautiful photos, but not as detailed in information as the other two listed here. Also comes with a CD-ROM version of the book for even more money.

ORGANIC PROBLEM SOLVING & COMPANION PLANTING TIPS

Avoid chemical solutions and systemics whenever possible. Don't harm kids, wildlife, pets or Mother Earth. Also, don't kill "good" bugs (like ladybugs). Good bugs are our friends.

- **Dead Snails Leave No Trails** by Loren Nancarrow and Janet Hogan Taylor, ISBN: 0-89815-852-4; \$11.95
- **Slug Bread & Beheaded Thistles** by Ellen Sandbeck, ISBN: 0-7679-0542-3; \$10.95

Both of these books offer the sorts of tips commonly found in The Old Farmer's Almanac and passed down generation to generation. They both have pest control tips for home & garden.

Did you know that Epsom Salts is good at repelling slugs AND it also makes an excellent tomato fertilizer! These books and the next two listed are both good with many, many tips.

- **1,112 Down-to-Earth Garden Secrets** by Country Books; ISBN: 0-89821-233-2
- **Giant Book of Garden Solutions** by Jerry Baker, ISBN: 0-922433-51-8

I also like these two books for pest control tips, but they also have many, many more general gardening tips than "just" info on pest control. The Garden Secrets book is produced by the editors of Birds & Blooms magazine. It is a compilation of reader tips.

- **Carrots Love Tomatoes: Secrets of Companion Planting for Successful Gardening** by Louise Riotte, ISBN: 1580170277

Keep your hi-liter and sticky-note bookmarks handy when reading any of these fun books

Did you call for your free High Country Gardens Catalog yet?

Xeriscape Resources

A document that I created for various garden tours included here.

Xeriscape is NOT...

dry only, or just rocks & gravel, or necessarily 'no lawn' landscaping, or native plants only, or a boring mono-culture of spiny plants.

Xeriscape is not a specific plant or group of plants. It is a technique for using water wisely; using...

The 7 Fundamental Principles of Xeriscape:

- Plan & Design...
for water conservation, beauty and ease of maintenance.
- Practical Turf Areas...
of manageable sizes, shapes, and appropriate grasses.
- Group Plants with Similar Water Needs...
together so you can water them effectively and appropriately.
- Amend the Soil...
with compost as needed by the site and the type of plants used.
- Mulch...
to reduce evaporation, to keep the soil cool, and keep weeds down.
- Irrigate Efficiently...
with properly designed systems and by applying the right amount of water at the right time.
- Maintain the Landscape...
by mowing, weeding, pruning and fertilizing properly.

Learn more about
Xeriscape, Colorado!

<http://www.xeriscape.org/>

The term 'Xeriscape' is
©Denver Water

WaterWise Resources & Information

WEB SITES:

<http://www.xratedgardening.com/>

X-Rated Gardening by Garden Centers of Colorado

<http://www.csu.org/environment/xeriscape/where/index.html>

Colorado Springs Utilities Xeriscape and the Demonstration Garden Online.

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/garden/07234.html>

CSU Fact Sheet: [Xeriscaping: Retrofit Your Yard](#) (#7.234) Planning to retrofit your existing landscape? Here's how to do it! You may not have to dig out the old sod after all! Read all the other CSU Xeriscape Fact Sheets here also.

<http://www.water.denver.co.gov/xeriscapeinfo/xeriscapeframe.html>

Denver Water: Xeriscape. You will also find the list of all Front Range Xeriscape Demonstration Gardens here.

<http://www.denver.lib.co.us/dpl/news/xeriscape.html>

Denver Public Library Xeriscape Information

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/ptlk/1904.html>

PlantTalk: Learning More about Xeriscaping

If searching for "Xeriscape" on the web, be aware that Xeriscape is a term used to denote waterwise landscaping for the region in question. "Xeriscape plants" for Florida have vastly different water needs than "Xeriscape plants" for Colorado.

FREE CATALOGS (and plant reference):

<http://www.highcountrygardens.com/>

High Country Gardens. Free catalog/handbook is GREAT info/image resource. Never go shopping without it! Also sign up for their free online Xeriscaping newsletter. 800/925-9387

<http://www.plantsofthesouthwest.com/>

Plants of The Southwest. 800/788-7333

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<http://www.wildseedfarms.com/>

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DEER RESISTANT PLANT LISTS!

Remember, there are no guarantees with this—the deer don't read the lists!

<http://www.kassj.com/gardens/deerresist.html>

<http://www.deerresistantplants.com/>

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/ptlk/2302.html>

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/natres/06520.html>

<http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt/wildlife/deer.htm#DeerResistant>

http://www.mydeergarden.com/Plant_DB/

Planning Phase...

ALWAYS PLANT LIKE-WATER NEEDS TOGETHER! (HYDROZONE)

Don't overwater or underwater plants that are too close to something that gets a different amount of watering. Zone your plants accordingly! High-water plants go with or next to your lawn watering zone (or next to your runoff from the downspout!).

MICROCLIMATES

Take advantage of microclimates. Plant something needing more moisture against a protective North step, wall or rock. Consider shade, exposure, proximity to water, and nearby protective hardscape when planting.

COMPANION PLANTING

Let nature be your pesticide and more...

To naturally deter aphids: Plant onions, chives, & garlic (anything in the allium family) around roses, daisies, columbines and whatever else attracts aphids.

Hide unsightly spring bulb foliage as it dies back: I plant Snow-on-the-Mountain/Bishop's Weed with my spring bulbs. When the foliage starts to die back on the bulbs, the Snow-on-the-Mountain is coming up to cover the unsightly foliage!

See the book lists page for more companion planting tips.

BUTTERFLY GARDENING?

Make sure you have plants for the caterpillars to eat, as well as the nectar plants for the adults in your yard so butterflies will select your garden to use as a home. Provide for all generations. Download the Fact Sheet from CSU for lists of these plants: <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/insect/05504.html>

LANDSCAPE FABRIC—IT'S A BAD THING!

Do not use landscape fabric! Mulch directly over dead sod or amended soil; the sod will eventually breakdown into wonderful compost. Fabric prevents the great compost from decomposed mulch (on top) from working back into the soil. This great broken down organic material sits on top of the fabric. Roots LIKE that! They don't have to go deep for that great "black gold." This means that shallow roots are NOT waterwise (nor long-lived). Instead of growing deep to become drought resistant, the plant roots will actually grow UP to get to the 'black gold' compost (the roots 'pancake'). Bad soil under the fabric remains bad — no improvement, no drought tolerance.

I originally had put fabric into my Ornamental Grass Garden. My grasses were not flourishing as they should have. In Spring of 2003, I attended a seminar at the Xeriscape Demo Garden on Mesa Rd and found out how bad landscape fabric was when used with planted material. I came home and

began ripping out my fabric... Sure enough, there it was, beautiful organic decomposed material ON TOP of the fabric. The soil underneath was still nasty. On top of that, I had to use a linoleum knife to CUT AWAY THE ROOTS of some of my larger grasses—the roots had begun growing UP and into the weave of the fabric to get to that organic material. In cutting the roots away, I put one grass into a severe shock that almost killed it.

Use fabric only with inorganic/rock mulch where you desire no plant growth.

DEER RESISTANT

Deer munching a problem in your neighborhood? Remember two things about "deer-resistant plant lists"—the deer don't read these lists **and YOUR MILEAGE MAY VARY!**

Extreme conditions may affect what a deer will eat from year to year (drought, lack of food, overpopulation, etc). There are no guarantees that plants in these lists are "deer proof" in your area/neighborhood. But they can get you started on your search. There are exceptions to every rule.

Or do it the easy way... Look around and/or ask your neighbors. What don't the deer eat at their house?

Deer-resistant plant list links on bottom of page 4 of this document.

Purchasing Phase...

RECOMMENDED LOCAL RESOURCES...

MULCH:

Rocky Top Resources near I-25 & Circle Drive or Don's Garden Shop at Powers and Platte. Far cheaper than Pioneer or C&C. Use the recyclers! Buy shredded mulch that 'knits' against being wind blown (fine or coarse shredded 'tree' works just as well as cedar). Mulch 3-4" deep—retards weed growth, retains water and shades plant roots. All mulch, regardless of color, bleaches to grey in a year or so at this altitude anyway!

For my front Xeriscape near the street in August of 2002, I paid just under \$400 for 5 cu yards of mulch from Pioneer.

When I Xeriscaped my brother's home in Rockrimmon six months later, I went to Rocky Top. I paid a little over \$400 for 30 cu yards of mulch (not including delivery). Pioneer and C&C have to buy their mulch from a supplier. Rocky Top (and Don's) ARE suppliers. They both also carry compost to amend your soil.

PLANTS:

I got most of my Xeriscape garden plant material from Morning Glory Nursery (a temporary seasonal nursery). Call Tom at 661-8781 to get on his mailing list notification for each season. Excellent stock, nice guy. For 2007, they are located at Academy & Union near Perkins.

I also use Hillside Gardens & Nursery on the very south end of Institute (1006 S Institute) near Fountain Blvd. They use the High Country Gardens catalog as a guide to stock their nursery. Be sure to visit their beautiful demonstration gardens, attend their free summer concerts, and more!

Bamboo Sourcing: BambooSourcing.com (Sebastopol, CA)

GENERAL RULES OF THUMB WHEN BUYING PLANTS

First, remember that all rules have exceptions...

1. Silver/Grey foliage is xeric/drought resistant and likes direct sun. (ie: artemisias, sages, santolina, lamb's ear)
2. Variegated foliage generally does much better in shade.
3. Dark/purple foliage are mostly shade or partial shade lovers too, (although many exceptions).
4. "Stinky" or "Spikey" deter deer!
"Stinky" ie: lavender, mint, yarrow, allium, catmint, salvia, thyme
"Spikey" ie: agave, yucca, cactus, globe thistle, sea holly, creeping holly, mahonia, purple coneflower blossoms

Remember when buying plants at any nursery, the standard plant tags in the pots may be generic tags from growers and so may be geared to a standard for a more moist/temperate climate "back East." Because it says "perennial" does not mean it is a perennial in Colorado. Always check zone information and water requirements.

More plant buying tips:

Most lavender is hardy here (and quite xeric), but Spanish Lavender is too tender in this climate (dies). Most culinary sages are perennials here, but Pineapple Sage is an annual here. Salvia (also known as sage) is a great xeric plant used in many Xeriscapes, but Salvia greggii is too tender here.

The GOOD tags you want to watch for?

Plant Select™ (Evaluated by Denver Botanic Gardens & Colorado State University) and X-Rated™ (Evaluated by Colorado Garden Centers) plant tags are a good indicator that these plants are specially selected for high & dry climates in Colorado.

An employee of the plant department at Home Depot or WalMart may not be a certified horticulturist, let alone an expert in Xeriscape. Were they selling paint before they got the job in the plant department? The real certified plant experts usually work at better plant nurseries. Be sure to think about the credentials of the person whose advice you are asking.

TAKE YOUR CATALOG...

Do what I do, **never go plant shopping without your High Country Gardens Catalog!** If a nursery snubs their nose at you for bringing it in, walk out! I have YET to encounter a nursery who treated me poorly for bringing in my catalog. I'm not comparing prices, I'm using it for plant detail information (height/width, sun, water, deer &/or rabbit proof, etc).

I always keep a copy of the catalog in my car, just in case I come across some plants for sale when unexpected.

Planting Phase...

FERTILIZER & PLANTING



When you plant, get some OSMOCOTE Slow-Release Fertilizer (pink packaging). Put approximately 1 TBSP per 1 gallon perennial in the hole before you seat the rootball.

This is the only fertilizing I do for in-ground plants (ever!). I do not want my plants dependent upon fertilizer. I want them to "make it" on their own. Most Xeriscape plant varieties are natives anyway or adapted to this climate and so do fine.

Root-Bound Pots:

When you get your new plant from the nursery, the roots are often root-bound in the pot. If you just stick the plant in the ground this way, they will continue to grow in a circular pattern like the pot. For this reason you need to "tickle the roots." If the problem is minor, then use your fingers to loosen the roots at the bottom. If it is heavily root bound, you may slice or tear into the rootball with a knife or other sharp garden tool. Slice into the ball in three or four places around the bottom. Just slice into the ball about 1-3 inches (less for a smaller pot) on the bottom and gently spread the sections outward.

Backfill & Watering:

Once you have the hole dug, fill it with water and wait for it to drain. Then put your slow-release (pellet) fertilizer into the hole for the plant. Drop the prepared plant into the hole. Backfill the hole with good backfill.* Press it down with your hands, water it in well again (long slow trickle until it is flooded). Pull mulch up around the plant to within 1/2" of crown.

**If you have not previously amended the soil with good compost material, then make sure you do so in your planting hole. When digging your hole, dig it twice as wide as you will need it. Add compost to the material you dug out to make a 50/50 mixture. Place the plant in center of the hole and then backfill the planting hole with the new mixture.*

Water the new planting in very well. Keep regular watering the first year to establish.

More Tips...

STANDING WATER & MOSQUITOES

Large water containers (plastic trash cans) around the property for hand watering where needed. BUT, I make sure to keep Mosquito Dunks (Bacillus thuringiensis var. israelensis aka: BTi) floating in the standing water to naturally kill larvae. These bacterial dunks are harmless to other living things and so are safe around kids, pets and wildlife (birdbaths, dog water bowls, ponds). BTi comes in dunk (doughnut) form, and as granules.

RECYCLED WATER

Did you know that using recycled water in Colorado is technically against the law? The result of reclaiming water via a rain barrel or other recycling measures (even hauling it out in a bucket from your sink of dirty dishwasher) is called "grey water." Because Colorado is the Rocky Mountain state with the Continental Divide, since pioneer days, our water belongs to us AND all other states downstream from us! We are technically allowed to use it only once and then "send it on down the line." We are not allowed to capture and store the water.

I have noticed in New Mexico's Fundamental Principles of Xeriscape that they add an 8th — recycling of water. I guess it's not illegal down there! Oh well, lots of folks do it here in Colorado, but be aware that it's a "don't ask—don't tell" sort of thing and this may be why you would have a hard time finding water reclamation products in local stores. Use the Internet!

CONTAINER WATER GARDEN TIPS

Keep them algae-free by obeying these 2 simple rules:

1. Make sure your pond lining is dark (black) to absorb light. For my small garden, I use black trash bags (one inside another for 2-ply strength). For bigger gardens, you can buy pond liner fabric (\$\$\$). In the past, I have also used black trash bags (for color) with a heavy CLEAR shower curtain over it for thickness and strength.
2. The water surface must be 2/3 covered with plant (or other) material (fake flower floaters work ok).

If your water is not moving (fountain, etc), use Mosquito Dunks to kill larvae.

TOMATOES LIKE EPSOM SALTS & TUMS!

Old fashioned fertilizer for Tomatoes? Epsom Salts (Magnesium Sulfate)! Plus, use Tums™ in soil for calcium to prevent "Blossom Drop." Stick three Tums into the soil and water thoroughly so they dissolve—no more blossom drop! Dissolve no more than 1/8 cup of Epsom Salts in a gallon of water, apply to base of plant. Do this maybe 3-4 times in a season.

MORE PLANT INFO

And don't forget the Internet! Use Google to look up info about specific plants or topics! See <http://www.xeriscape.org/resources.html> for a complete list of my favorite gardening and Xeriscape links & resources! (I wrote the page!)

If converting an *existing yard* to Xeriscape...

SOD—JUST KILL IT!

(Don't bother to remove it!)

If you want to plant a garden with mulch on the surface... You do not need to remove your old sod (even if it is weedy!), just kill it by suffocating it... use black plastic or newspaper layers to kill the sod. Remove once the sod is dead.

XERI CONVERSION & IRRIGATION ZONES

Go easy on yourself... if you already have an irrigation system, convert an entire irrigation zone to xeriscape of one hydrozone (low, moderate or high water). Why rebuild your irrigation system if you don't need to? I converted one whole irrigation zone to low water. Only plants requiring low water are in that zone. Same irrigation system, I just turn it on for less time than before. Another irrigation zone is planned to convert to moderate water. I planted all my high-water plants (roses, aspen) in the same zone with the bluegrass turf (also high-water).

Visit <http://www.xeriscape.org/>

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This entire document and its contents ©Kass Johns

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Garden Art & Design by Kass • Specializing in Xeriscape Gardens
Design, writing & consultation, custom paths, step stones,
garden art and totems & much more!