

Glossary

Accent plant: a plant with special characteristics that attracts attention due to its flowering color, leaf texture, height, or form, and usually is used to provide a focal point to a particular grouping of plants.

Annuals: herbaceous plants that complete their growing cycle in a single season and must be planted anew each year.

Border: annuals or perennials developed to form rows or masses placed along a path, or at the edge of a planter.

Bud break: projection on stem of undeveloped shoot, leaf, and/or flower.

Catchment area: is any area from which water can be harvested, such as rooftops, paved areas, and driveways.

Drip irrigation: a method of watering landscapes in which water is released evenly and slowly through emitters at a constant and specific rate.

Drip line: the line beyond the outer edge of the plant's foliage.

Emitter: a device used in a drip irrigation system to deliver water to a plant's root zone at a constant and specific rate, and at a low volume and pressure.

Establishment period: the length of time needed for plants to clearly show root and foliage growth.

Growing season: the period from early spring to late summer when plant growth occurs.

Hardscaping: the inorganic components of the landscape design (paved areas).

Herbaceous plants: nonwoody plants that have flexible, green stems.

Herbicides: chemical agents used to destroy or inhibit plant growth.

Leaching: the movement of soluble salts or contaminants in the soil below the root zone.

Leaching (of fertilizers): the movement of fertilizers in the soil below the root zone. Leached fertilizers are wasted and find their way into the groundwater, where they might have adverse environmental effects.

Maintenance: keeping the landscape and plants well cared for and in a healthy condition.

Microclimates: climates of localized spaces that differ from the overall climate of the area, such as under a tree, or at the top of a hill or in between buildings.

Mulch: organic or inorganic material applied to a planting bed as a top-dressing to serve a number of purposes that include retaining moisture, inhibiting weed growth, controlling erosion, and reducing soil compaction and salt buildup. Mulches also serve as an aesthetic element in the landscape. Typical mulches include compost, bark chips, and inert materials such as decomposed granite and river run rock.

Oasis area: small, highly visible and highly maintained, and lushest area of the landscape - such as the public zone, or area around the patio - that contains high water-use plants. The plants in these zones need to be watered regularly in the absence of rainfall.

Perennials: herbaceous or woody plants that continue to live from year to year.

Pesticides: legal poisons that kill plant-infecting organisms by contact or ingestion.

Pruning: cutting off parts or branches of a shrub or tree to improve shape or growth.

Shearing: the uniform cutting or clipping of plant materials with large scissors or shears.

Slow-release fertilizer: fertilizing materials (natural or synthetic) that require microbial, chemical, and/or physical breakdown to become available to plants.

Softscaping: the planted areas of the landscape.

Specimen tree: a tree with particularly impressive characteristics embodied in its flowers, leaf texture, or form. Specimen trees can be planted alone or in groups, usually in the most important areas of the garden, and generally are installed as mature plants, when their true form and unique, individual character has begun to emerge. Specimen plants tend to be more expensive than plant materials used en masse.

Spray irrigation: a method of watering landscapes using a mechanical device that releases water into the air in a series of droplets approximating rainfall.

Succulent: a plant that stores water in its leaves and stems, and occasionally in its roots. The water-storing part of a succulent is swollen, often greatly so. This attribute creates conspicuous and often striking growth forms, and therefore, most succulents can be used as accents if they are large enough to be readily noticed.

Transpiration: loss of moisture from plants through leaves and other parts of the plant.

Water harvesting: capturing rainfall for use in irrigation and different domestic uses.

Water stress: a condition that occurs when a plant's demand for water exceeds the supply.

Water-use zone: the zoning or grouping of plant materials according to their water needs.

Weed: aggressive, prolific, exotic species that are opportunistic and grow obstinately in exposed soil.