

# Making Each Drop Count

Landscape designer Sandra Batley provides simple water-conscious design solutions for your garden.

ALTHOUGH WE DON'T THINK OF NEW ZEALAND AS A DRY country water conservation takes on greater significance over the summer period when consumption rises by up to 50%. A massive amount of our cities' water supplies goes on watering gardens and outdoor use, resulting in several regions around the country implementing restrictions to combat the problem.

As any experienced gardener will tell you, the secret to a healthy garden has more to do with preparation and how effectively you use water, rather than how much you use. So by employing some simple, yet effective procedures your plants and lawn areas will be green, healthy and you'll save water too.



## Waterwise Planting

Planning a waterwise garden involves selecting plants which are appropriate to the site. Choose plants with similar water needs and soil types, and plant them in groups. This enables you to irrigate more effectively without wasting water, creating a landscape that can be maintained and flourish with minimal watering.

There are many interesting planting themes you can design into your garden to further reduce the demand on our water supplies especially during the critical summer season.



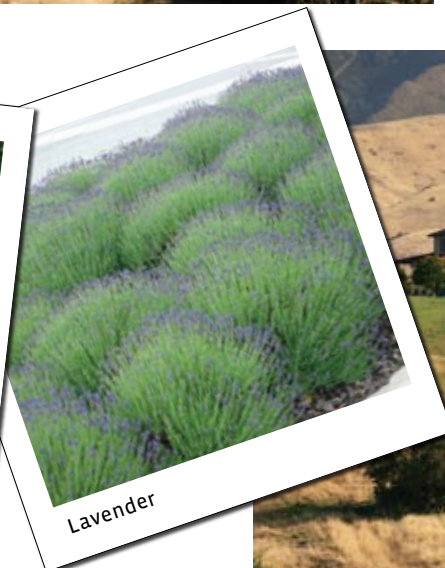
Hebe Oratia

## Native Planting

The wonderful thing about native plants is that they are accustomed to local conditions, they need little maintenance and are well adapted to survive local conditions with minimum fuss and water. New Zealand has a wide and interesting palette of native species that will allow you to create an interesting look all year round. Think hebes, coprosma, flaxes, grasses, pohutukawa, corokia and astelia. They work well especially in coastal areas where full dense planting can be achieved.



Cistus



Lavender

## Mediterranean Style

Aromatic and colourful plantings of cistus, bougainvillea, lavenders and olives. These plants just love the hot sun, as long as the drainage is good, you can create the feeling of a Provencal landscape.







Aloe plicatilis

Astelia (silvery colour foliage)



## Hot-Dry Subtropical

These plants are fairly drought tolerant and have a distinctive striking architectural form. Most, however perform better with some regular watering as well as good drainage. They are generally identified by their bluish or silver tinge foliage colour. Consider aloe plicatilis, dracena draco, aloe banksii, nolia recurvata, butia capitata and gazania hybrids.



## Traditional

This is a versatile style which can also be created in dry areas, using plants that require little or no extra water and work with the climate. Consider gazania, arcotis, lavender, portulaca, petunia, agapanthus and convolvulus.

**ABOVE** If you want to create a traditional style garden that is still water wise, do so using flowering carpet roses. These are low maintenance roses which lend themselves to mass plantings. Once established they become quite drought resistant.



Petunia



Lavender



# Keep Your Garden Green with WaterLillee®

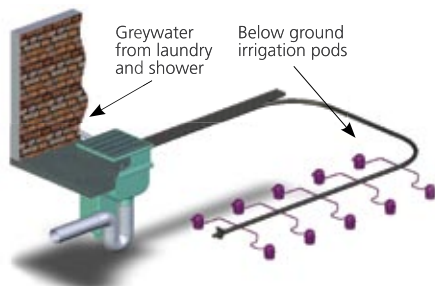
(Even in drought conditions)

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LIFESTYLE



## How It Works:

WaterLillee® is a smart, sustainable garden irrigation system that automatically diverts used water from the bath, shower and laundry and recycles it directly to your garden. You can control the water diversion from a simple keypad conveniently located inside your home.



## Advantages:

- Automatic garden watering using fresh greywater
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\* based on a two person household, one shower each per day



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## 8 Ways to Reduce Water Consumption When Watering

1. Check soil moisture before watering. If your soil is moist 10 centimeters below the surface, you don't need to water.
2. Only water on calmer days, in the cool of the early morning or evening, so that the benefit of your watering last longer as wind and sun will cause evaporation.
3. Water close to the ground at a rate the soil can absorb. Plants take up moisture through their feeder roots and low, slow watering is the best way to get it there.
4. Don't over-water, as this will encourage fungus, root rot, rusts, mildew and black spot to occur.
5. Soak; don't sprinkle. Less frequent, deep soakings encourage feeder roots to grow deeply in search of water. This will help your plants to survive short-term drought conditions. Frequent light sprinklings of water encourage shallow roots that are more vulnerable in dry weather.
6. Established plants only need half an hour of watering once or twice a week in dry weather, as long as the water can soak into the ground.
7. Control your hose with a trigger. A trigger device lets you stop and start the water flow from your hose instantly.
8. Mulch is a thick cover of organic or inorganic material laid over garden beds. It reduces exposure to wind, helps to hold and build the soil, prevents weeds and keeps water in the root zone wood chips.

## Recycling Water

What happens when there is too much rain? When there is an abundance of water, one of the easiest ways to collect rainwater is from the roof of your house, garage or shed and store it in a tank until you need it. Rainwater is free and a perpetually renewing water supply for irrigating your garden. Installing a rainwater tank is relatively simple and inexpensive.

Gardeners can also reduce water pollution associated with heavy downpours by developing rain gardens, which capture storm water runoff and help prevent it from entering local lakes, streams, and coastal waters. Rain gardens are a stunning way of holding stormwater runoff in your own backyard, filtering and absorbing runoff before it is released back into the public stormwater system.

Grey water used in the home, for washing and bathing, can be reused in your garden as long as you adhere to a few simple rules. Never re-use water containing strong chemicals or detergents as it can have a negative impact on your garden, and always allow the water to go cold before re-using it. Also, never use grey water on edible crops or leaves for risk of contamination. ■

*Sandra Batley is an award-winning landscape designer and owner operator of Auckland-based innovative garden design company Flourish, [www.flourishgardens.co.nz](http://www.flourishgardens.co.nz)*