

**What Is Xeriscaping Anyway?**

**By Lizz Gaylord,**

**rtbay@yahoo.com**

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**Educational Goals:** Learn the basics of water wise planting, energy efficient landscape; including xeriscaping, energy-efficient plant placement, and native plant gardening

**Description:** The students will be introduced to key concepts of water use and xeriscaping; including native plant gardening as well as plant placement around housing to keep air conditioning usage down. The second session includes the students actually building or drawing a water wise, energy efficient yard.

**Time:** 90 minutes, 1 module at 90 minutes each

**Materials Needed**

* Portable laptop and projector for presentation
* Power Point Presentation: What is Xeriscaping Anyway?
* Soil jars for the demonstration on soil preparation.
* Hand out the “Yard Template”
* List of Sacramento Native Plants
* Fact Cards of the different native plants and drought tolerant plants.

**Additional Resources**

<http://eartheasy.com/grow_xeriscape.htm>

**Topics to Discuss**

* The basics of wise water use/conservation
* The basics of xeriscaping
* The basics of native plant gardening

**Schedule:** This lesson is intended to be offered after the “How to Build Green” module.

In this presentation, the mentor should:

* Introduce the principles of water conservation, native plant gardening, and xeriscaping with the brief slide show provided. **(30 minutes)**. This assumes that the mentor is set up prior to student arrival.
* On SLIDE #13, bring out the soil jars, to show the difference of soils; to demonstrate why soil preparation is important. **(5 minutes).**
* After the slideshow, a discussion should be led by the mentor to encourage the students to talk about the kinds of traditional landscaping they see around their neighborhoods and what are the potential problems with traditional landscaping. **(10- 15 minutes)**
* Hand out the Fact Cards for the students to view (You can also pass them around at the beginning of class as an introduction or after, wherever you see fit). They will be able to see that the native plants are not unsightly but quite beautiful. They can incorporate these plants into their drawings to follow. **(5-10 minutes)**
* Pass around the drawings of the houses from the previous class and ask the students to draw in what types of plants they would use to “landscape” their house. **(10-20 minutes)**
* Have the students present their drawings to the class (doesn’t have to be a formal presentation, just go around the room and ask the students to present the “highlights” of their project.) **(Remainder of class)**
* The students with the three most comprehensive and accurate drawings will receive a prize!
* Handout the Native Plant List. Remind the students to remind their parents to utilize xeriscaping techniques whenever possible.

Mentor Notes

Soil jars: these will be two clear jars filled with different types of materials (TBD) that the mentor will pour water into and show the ways in which water either runs through or soaks into the material.

This session will be a culmination of both energy efficient building and landscaping.