Low-Water Plants for Season-Long Color

Helen Muntz

Why Water- Efficient Landscaping Matters in Utah

- Utah's arid to semi-arid climate and limited water supply
- Drought cycles and population growth
- Outdoor landscapes as largest opportunity for water savings
- Shifting from "water use" to "water value"

Flowering Oregano, "Hops Flower"

Outdoor Water Use

- Outdoor irrigation is the largest single-use within Utah households
- 2-3 times greater than indoor use
  - 60–75% of urban residential water demand
- Areas of most potential for conservation gains

Shift in Approach to Landscaping

- Water Efficient Landscaping Incentives (S.B. 118)
- Landscape Requirements (H.B. 450)
- Education and Conservation – Utah Water Savers (H.B. 307)

  https://utahwatersavers.com

  https://weberBasin.gov

Xeriscaping Vs. Water-Efficient

- Utah-adapted, low-water plants

Landscape Locally!

- Living plants cool the air, build healthy soil, & provide a welcoming and soothing space.

Hydro-zoning

Grouping Plants with the similar irrigation needs in the same zone

Know your sprinkler zones

- Each zone can run on different schedules
- Allows you to adjust your irrigation schedule based on the water requirements of plants in each zone

- Examples:
  - Practical turf areas
  - Shrubs and perennials
  - Vegetable gardens or flower beds
  - Water-wise plants

Remove Existing Lawn

- Herbicide
  - 2-3 applications
  - Cover with compost
  - Till (4 weeks)
- Sod Cutter
- Solarization
  - Clear Plastic for 6 weeks

Sheet Mulching

- Cardboard overlap (4-6 inches)
- Topsoil/Compost (2-4 inches)
- Mulch (2-4 inches)

Irrigation 101

Utah is the 2nd driest state in the nation

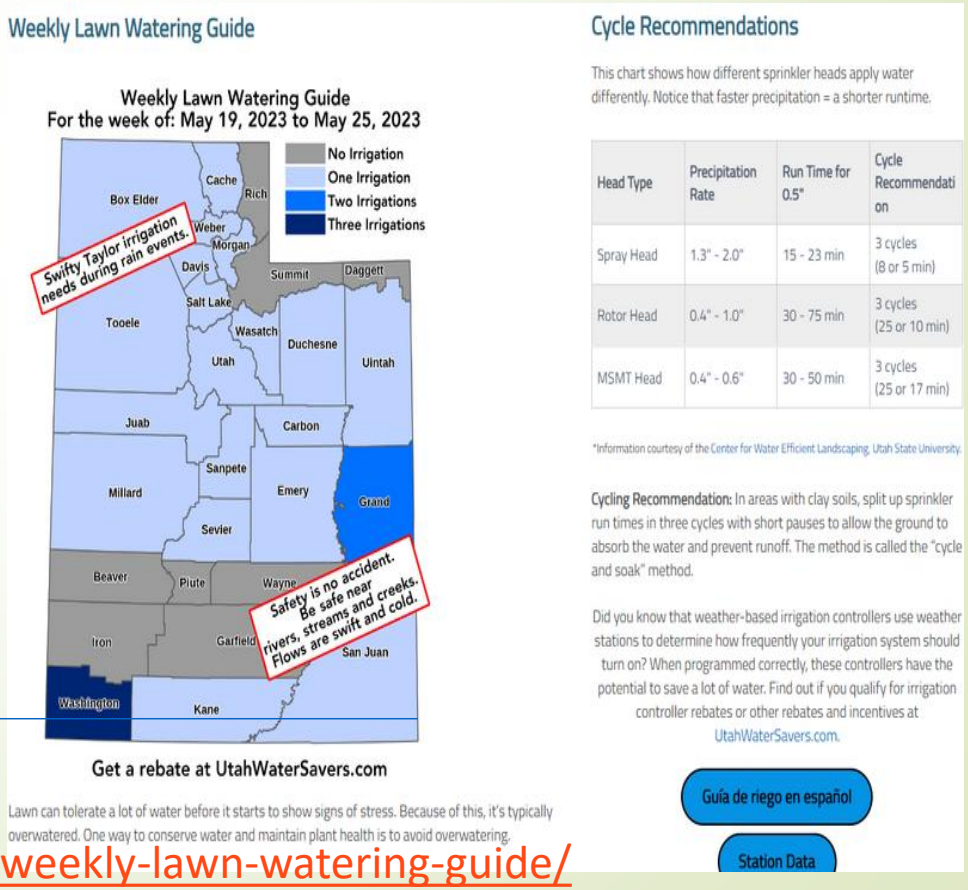
Urban landscape irrigation in Utah uses up to 65% Municipal Water

Water facilitates nutrient uptake for plants

- Turf-cool season vs. warm season
  - Cool- summer dormancy
  - Warm-generally heat and drought resistant
- Perennials
  - Deep and less frequent watering
  - Soil and site conditions
- Trees and Shrubs
  - Deep, less frequent watering
  - More often over watered, or not watered deeply (trees planted in turf)

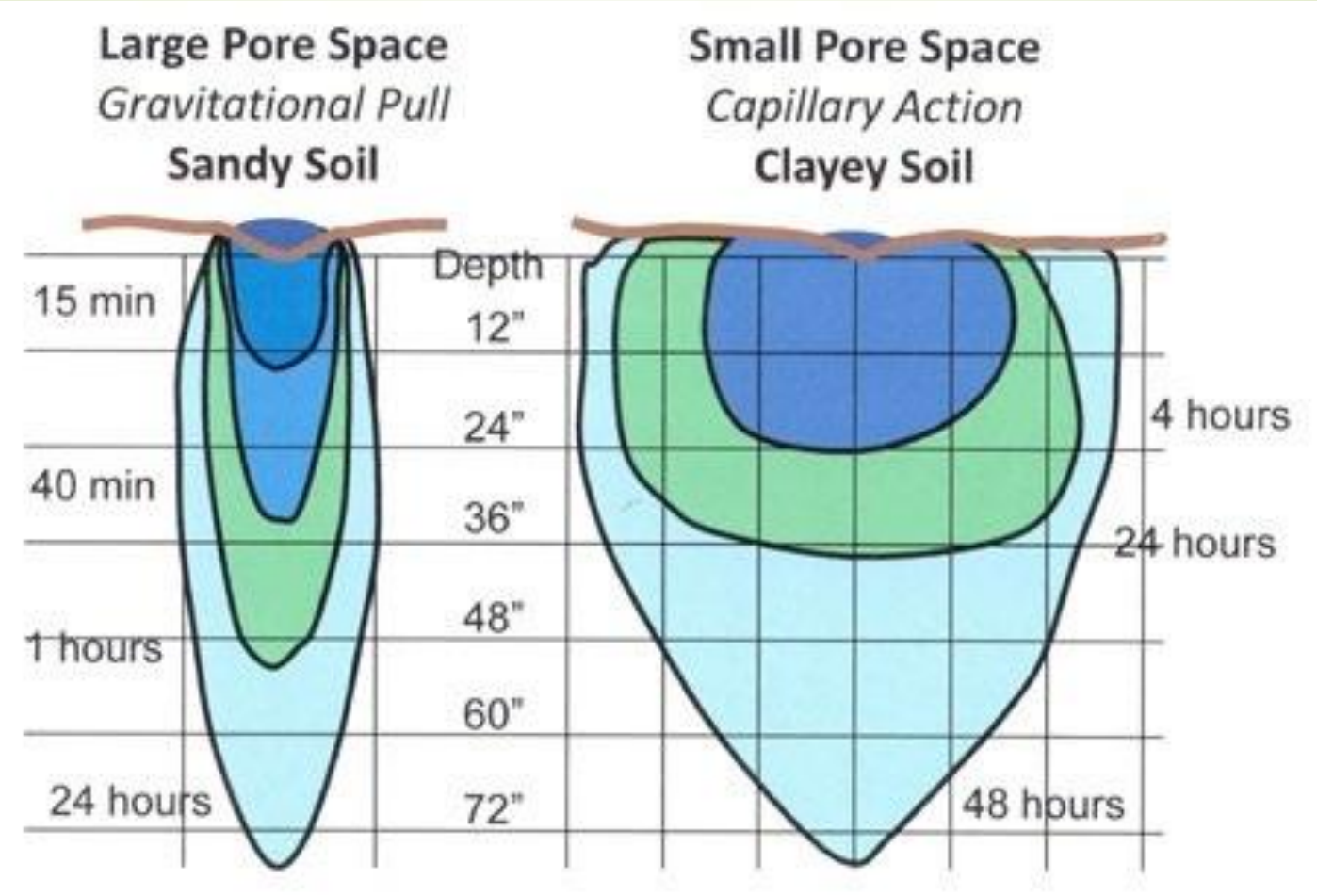
Why do we Irrigate?

- Replace Water Loss – **Evapotranspiration (ET)**
  - Evaporation
    - Water evaporation from the soil surface
  - Transpiration
    - Water loss in the plant (plant sweat)
  - Fluctuations based on:
    - Solar radiation, temperature, humidity, wind



https://conservewater.utah.gov/weekly-lawn-watering-guide/

Soil Texture and Drainage



Drip Irrigation

- High efficiency 90%+
- Puts water near root zone
- Low flow – no runoff
- Reduces weed growth
  - Reduced labor

Drip Irrigation

- Needs to have its own valve/zone
  - Not on the same zone as spray heads
- Pressure Reducer
- Filter

Drip irrigation types

In-Line Drip

Point Source Drip

Now Let's Talk PLANTS!

Native Vs. Water-Wise

Sego Lily, *Calochotus nuttallii*
Utah Native

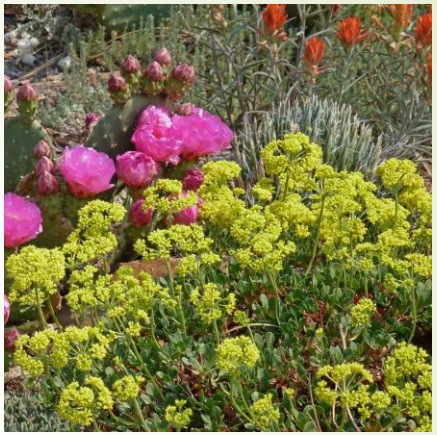
Veronica, "Royal Candles"
Water-Wise

Top Performing Native Plants for Low-Water Landscapes

- Lewisii,“Western Blue Flax”
- Sphaeralcea, “Globe Mallow”
- Eriogonum, “Sulphur Buckwheat ”
- Asclepias tuberosa, “Butterfly Milkweed”
- Penstemon Spp., “Rocky Mountain”, Firecracker”, “Pineleaf ”
- Oenothera, “Evening Primrose”
- Epilobium, “Fire Chalice”
- Mirabilis, “Desert Four-O’clock”

Top Performing Native Plants for Low-Water Landscapes

Linum Lewisii, **Blue Flax**



Eriogonum umbellatum, **Sulphur Buckwheat**

Sphaeralcea, **Globe Mallow**

Asclepias tuberosa, **Butterfly Weed**

Top Performing Native Plants for Low-Water Landscapes

Penstemon strictus, **Rocky Mountain Penstemon**

Penstemon eatonii, **Firecracker Penstimon**

Penstemon pinifolius, **Pineleaf Peanstemon**

Penstemon xylus, **Tushar Bluemat Peanstemon**

Top Performing Native Plants for Low-Water Landscapes

Oenothera macrocarpa,
Missouri Evening Primrose

Epilobium canum 'Stardust',
Hummingbird Trumpet
(Zaushnaria)

Top Performing Native Plants for Low-Water Landscapes

Aquilegia barnebyi,
Barneby's Columbine

Liatris mucronate, **Blazing Star or Gayfeather**

Top Performing Garden Perennials for Low-Water landscapes

- Agastache/Hyssop, “Humming Bird Mint”
- Gaura, “Whirling Butterflies” or “Wandflower”
- Buddleia, “Butterfly Bush”
- Lavandula, Lavender
- Baptisia, “False Indigo”
- Heliopsis, “false Sunflower” (Indicator Plant)
- Gaillardia, “Blanket Flower”
- Nepeta, “Catmint”
- Echinacea, “Cone Flower”

Top Performing Garden Perennials for Low-Water landscapes

Gaura Spp.,
Snow Fountain
(Whirling Butterflies)

Salvia x sylvestris,
May Night Salvia
Caradonna Salvia

Salvia dorrii,
Desert Purple Salvia

Agastache (Hyssop)

Agastache cana 'Sinning'
SONORAN SUNSET®
(Hummingbird Mint)

Agastache x
'Pstessene'
Coronado® Red
Agastache

Blue Boa Agastache

Top Performing Garden Perennials for Low-Water landscapes

Gaillardia grandiflora 'Arizona Sun',
Blanket Flower

Echinacea purpurea PowWow® Wild Berry,
Coneflower

Top Performing Garden Perennials for Low-Water landscapes

Nepeta faassenii 'Select Blue', **Catmint**

Baptisia,
False Indigo

Top Performing Garden Perennials for Low-Water landscapes

Lavandula angustifolia 'Hidcote Superior',
English Lavender

Buddleia davidii Buzz® 'Hot Raspberry',
Butterfly Bush

Low Water Grasses

Lawn alternatives:

- Blue Gramma Grass
- Buffalo Grass
- Crested Wheatgrass
- Zosia grass

Drought tolerant Ornamental Grasses

- Switch Grass ('Heavy Metal Blue', 'Shenandoah')
- Miscanthus ('Morning light')
- Reed grass ('Karl Foerster')
- Blue Oat Grass
- Pink Muhly Grass

Groundcovers!

SUN

- Veronica (creeping speedwell)
- Creeping Thyme
- Phlox
- Rock Cress
- Candytuft

SHADE

- Veronica (creeping speedwell)
- Sweet Woodruff
- Ajuga
- Lamium

SUN

Creeping Thyme

Rock Cress

Veronica/ Creeping Speedwell

SHADE

Sweet Woodruff

Ajuga

Low - Water Shrubs

- Elderberry
- Fern bush
- Smoke bush
- Russian Sage
- Bluebush Spirea
- Gro-low Fragrant Sumac

Sambucus nigra,
Black Lace Elderberry

Low - Water Shrubs

Sambucus nigra
Laced Up Elderberry

Chamaebatiaria millefolium
Fernbush

Low - Water Shrubs

Cotinus coggygria,
Smoke Bush

Perovskia 'Blue Spire',
Russian Sage

Low - Water Shrubs

Caryopteris,
Blue Mist Spirea or Bluebeard

Philadelphus coronarius,
Mock Orange

Deer Resistant Options

- Daffodils
- Iris
- Daylilies
- Lavender
- Desert 4-O-Clock
- Agastache / Hyssop
- Coreopsis / Tickseed
- Globe mallow
- Ornamental grasses
- Sedum
- Galardia
- Nepeta / Ctamint
- Papaver / Oriental Poppy
- Helianthemum / Rock Rose
- Epilobium/ Hummingbird trumpet
- Aquilegia / Columbine
- Liatris / Blazing Star
- Callirhoe / Wine cups

- Lamiastrum / Yellow Archangel
- Veronica / Turkish Speedwell
- Penstemon / Beardtongue
- Salvia / Medow Sage
- Helianthus / Maximilian's Sunflower
- Lamium / dead nettle
- Echinops / Globe Thistle
- Gaura / Whirling Butterflies
- Asclepias / Milkweed

Callirhoe, Wine Cups

March 2018 Horticulture/Landscape/2018-01pr

Landscaping in Dry Shade

15 Great Landscape Plants for Dry Shady Areas

Helen Muntz and ***Larry Rupp***

Finding the right landscape plants for dry areas that are also shady can be challenging. Most of the drought tolerant plants used in Utah's residential and commercial landscapes come from dry environments and are adapted to full sun. Therefore, these plants do not grow well in shaded environments.

Shade produces a microclimate with unique cooling effects, reduced soil evaporation and reduced plant transpiration (Lin & Lin, 2010). In spite of the common perception that shade gardens are always cool and moist, often there is not ample soil moisture. Often the very conditions that create shade can reduce soil moisture. For example, the soil beneath the canopy of a mature blue spruce is heavily shaded; however, between the canopy's ability to shed snow and water to the drip zone and the water demand of the tree itself, the soil immediately underneath the tree can be very dry. This is especially true in Utah where high elevation and low humidity increases solar radiation and transpiration from the very canopy that may be

Typically, shade plants have developed certain traits such as thin, shade adapted leaves that are less adapted to resist water loss. On the other hand, adaptive traits of most drought tolerant plants to full sun, such as small pubescent or thick succulent leaves, reduce their ability to grow in a shaded environment. The end result is a paradox where the adaptations which make a plant shade tolerant may also make it drought intolerant and the adaptations that make a plant drought tolerant may also make it shade intolerant.

The challenge to gardeners is to find plants that are tolerant of both shade and drought. In spite of the challenges of dry shade, there are a number of plants that can perform well in such an environment. Utah State University Extension compiled a list of plants that grow in dry shade. The list was sent in survey form to the Utah Public Garden Network to verify excellent performance of these plants when grown in dry shade. The following is a list of 15 plants that perform well in dry shade areas.

Perennials!

Partridge Feather & Dianthus

Creeping Phlox

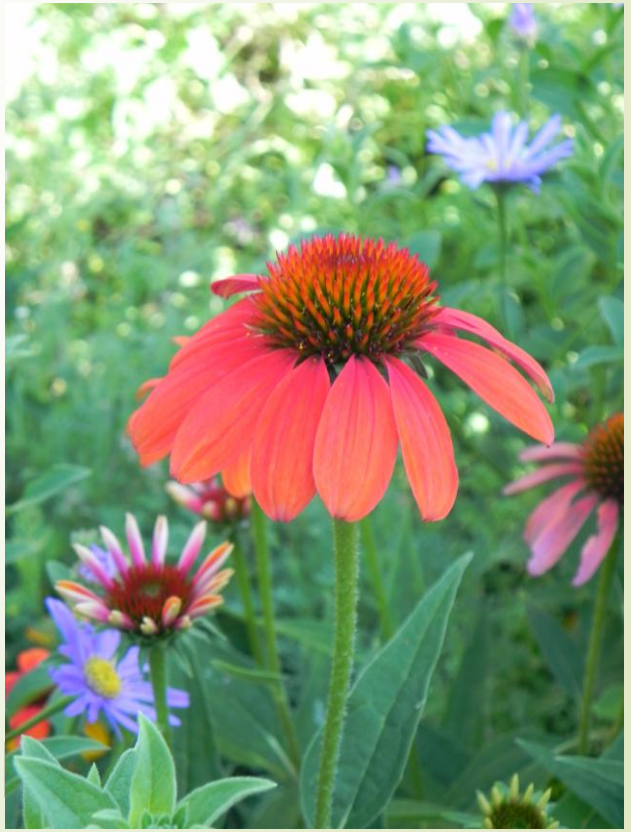
Flowering Oregano,
"Hops Flower"

Perennials!

Butterfly Bush

Orange Globe Mallow

Coneflower & Aster



Early spring

Primula sp.
"Primrose"

Pasqueflower

Lungwort

Hellebore

Brunnera

SPRING - Sun and Partial Shade

Peony

Anemone

False Indigo (Baptisia)

Jacob's Ladder

Variegated Jacob's Ladder

Allium

Spring – Partial to Full Shade

Monkshood

Lamiastrum

Lungwort

Brunaria

Tiarella

Spring to Summer transition

Spring

Poppies

Sol Dancer Daisy

Columbine

Blue flax

Campanula

Penstemon-Rocky Mountain

Late Spring Combinations

- Poppies, Columbine, Iris, Orange Globemallow, Blue Flax

Summer Perennials

Epilobium ‘Wasatch Fire’

Gaillardia

Red hot poker

Delosperma - Ice plant

Stella De Ora Daylily

Hummingbird

Blanket Flower

Yarrow

Coreopsis

Gaura

Hyssop

Lavender

Catmint

Veronica

Lady's Mantle

Corydalis

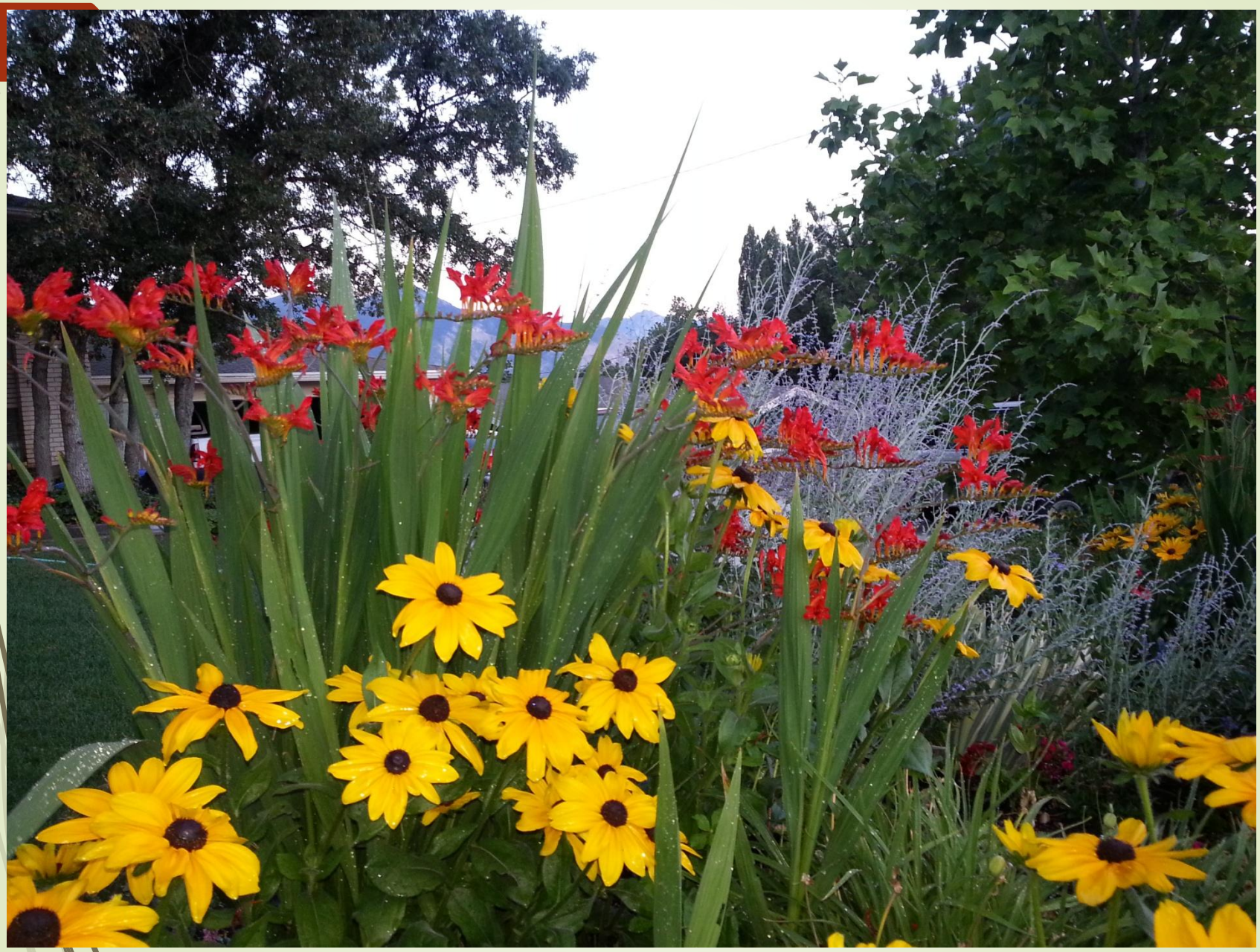
Campanula

Bee Balm

Coral Bells

Part-sun, Adaptable perennials

Black-eyed Susan, Crocosmia, Russian Sage



Fall bloomers

Autumn Joy Sedum

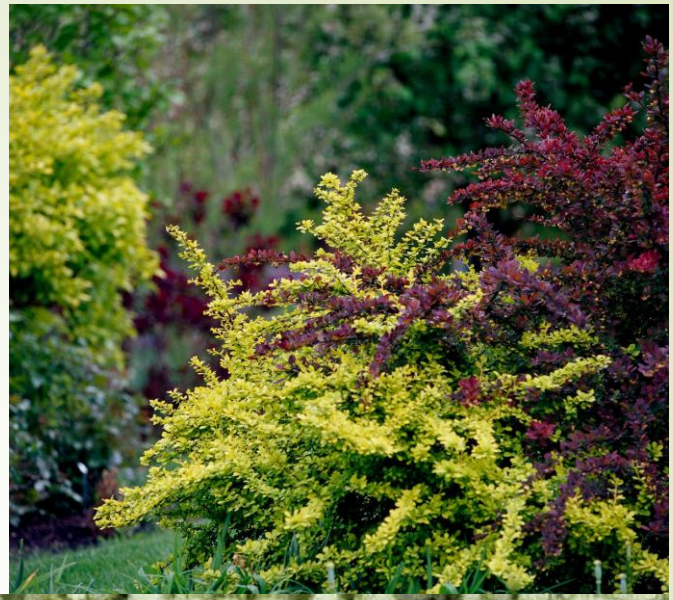
Fall Anemone

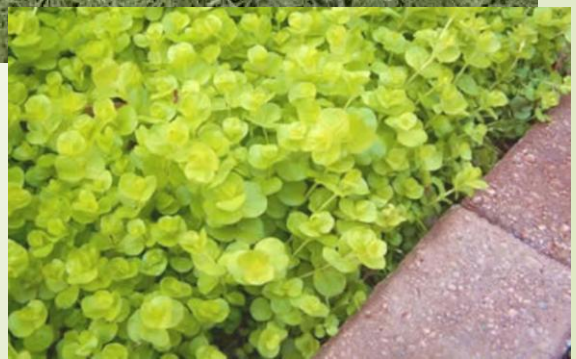
Aster “Monch”

Plumbago

Tips To Colorful Landscapes

- Design for sequential color
- Use foliage as a backbone – color and texture
- Group plants by water needs
  - Don't over-water
- Right Plant, Right Place
  - Full sun plants vs shade-partial shade
- Deadhead to promote continual blooms
- Mulch to reduce weed pressure and water loss
- Add seasonal "color Boosters" like Waterwise annuals
- Think Beyond Plants
  - Decorative stone, boulders, edging, planters, benches, etc.
- Creating season-long *interest*





Finding The Right Plants

- Plant Database
  - Plant List - WeberBasin.gov (WBWCD)
  - Conservation Garden Park (JVWCD)
  - Living Collections Plant Map (Red Butte Gardens)
- USU Center for Water Efficient Landscaping
  - Center for Water-Efficient Landscaping at Utah State University | USU
- High Country Gardens
  - High Country Gardens | Xeriscaping & Sustainable Gardening
- Visit Local Public Gardens and Nurseries

Thank You!

Class Feedback, Please