

# THE TEMPEST

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## XERISCAPING-WORKING WITH MOTHER NATURE

Ahhh, summer. Long, hot, sunny days. Short, warm, starry nights. The beach, baseball, cookouts, hiking, swimming and other outdoor activities that don't require insulated, knee high boots, mittens, wool hats and layers of clothing. But alas, summer too has its challenges. High humidity that makes 80 degrees feel like 100. Biting, disease carrying bugs that torment people and pets. Then there's my personal favorite-the compelling human need to maintain an attractive, healthy, green, perfectly manicured lawn and garden.

As I prepared this spring for my yearly battle with weeds, crab grass, grubs, chipmunks, skunks, deer and Mother Nature, I discovered an interesting concept on the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) website. It's called xeriscaping. "Xeros" is the Greek word for "dry". Xeriscaping is landscaping and gardening that requires very little water. Xeriscaping originated in Colorado where water shortages are common. However, the idea of low maintenance, water-wise landscaping has spread across the country as homeowners respond to environmental issues of water conservation, fertilizer and pesticide use. In New England xeriscaping is typically used in conjunction with natural or native landscaping. The end result is a landscape that is low maintenance low water consumption and beautiful.

Why is xeriscaping a concept that you should consider? Here in Hollis we depend upon our wells to supply us with adequate water for all of our year-round needs. In summer, however, demand for water increases as the water table decreases. In fact, during the spring and summer months, up to 50% of the average family's total water use is sprayed on lawns and gardens. Most of this water evaporates with very little actually being used by the plants. Xeriscaping can reduce water waste up to 70%.



An example of a xeriscape landscape

Xeriscaping doesn't mean substituting rocks for lawn, but it does take preparation and planning to produce a successful result. Keep the following in mind, if you are considering xeriscaping.

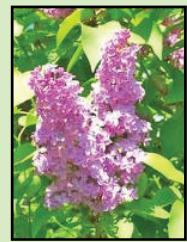
- Design your space. Plan to group plants with similar water needs together. Make sure the plants you choose are suitable for your specific space.
- Prepare the soil. A healthy, rich soil is essential.
- Low water does not mean no water. Irrigate wisely.
- Mulch. Mulching reduces weed growth and minimizes evaporation

- Maintenance. Though low maintenance a xeriscape cannot be totally ignored.

Following are some suggestions for plant materials to use in your New Hampshire xeriscape.



Purple Moor Grass



Lilac



Coreopsis



Sunflower

For more information and helpful tips about xeriscaping in New Hampshire, check out Environmental Fact Sheet WD-DWGB-26-4 on the NHDES website at [www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov).

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