

Water Wise Landscaping Codes and Design Templates Resource List

Last Updated 9/9/25

Landscaping Codes/Ordinances/Legislation

- Lincoln Institute of Land Policy study of codes and ordinances:
<https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/working-papers/research-informed-documents-practice>
- Western Resource Advocate's "Community Hub: Landscape Transformation & Water Conservation" resources: <https://westernresourceadvocates.org/community-hub-landscape-transformation-water-conservation/>
- CA MWEL: <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Water-Use-And-Efficiency/Urban-Water-Use-Efficiency/Model-Water-Efficient-Landscape-Ordinance>
- No non-functional turf:
 - Nevada: Assembly Bill 356
 - SNWA has prohibited grass lawn in the front yard (2005) and now the backyard (2021); there has not been any impact to the housing market.
 - Study of the SNWA turf removal program:
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S009506962030125X>
 - Colorado: <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-005>
 - Castle Rock, CO: no turf in front yards of new homes and backyard irrigated turf limited to 500 sf
 - California: Assembly Bill 1572, adopted 10-2023
 - <https://legiscan.com/CA/text/AB1572/id/2814825>
 - The use of potable water for the irrigation of nonfunctional turf located on commercial, industrial, and institutional properties, other than a cemetery, and on properties of homeowners' associations, common interest developments, and community service organizations or similar entities is prohibited as of the following dates:
 - All properties owned by local governments, local or regional public agencies, and public water systems, beginning January 1, 2027;
 - All other institutional properties and all commercial and industrial properties, beginning January 1, 2028;
 - All common areas of properties of homeowners' associations, common interest developments, and community service organizations or similar entities, beginning January 1, 2029; and
 - All properties owned by local governments, local public agencies, and public water systems in a disadvantaged community, beginning January 1, 2031, or the date upon which a state funding source is made available to fund conversion of nonfunctional turf on these properties to climate-appropriate landscapes, whichever is later.
- Scottsdale, Arizona: banned natural grass in the front yards of new homes built or permitted after August 15th, 2023

- Residential Landscape Revitalization Workbook:
<https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/docs/default-source/scottsdaleaz/design/green-building/residential-landscape-revitalization-workbook.pdf>
- Aspen, CO: water efficient landscaping standards
- County of San Diego Waterscape Rebate Program

Landscape Design Templates

- Sonoma-Marín County in CA templates and maintenance manual:
https://www.savingwaterpartnership.org/programs_list/landscape-design-templates/
- Northern Water in Colorado: <https://www.northernwater.org/landscape-templates>
- Eastern Municipal Water District, front and backyard templates:
<https://landscapesforliving.emwd.org/landscape-designs/>

Water Wise Landscaping Guidance:

- Turf conversion
 - How to pay for turf conversion: <https://tapin.waternow.org/resources/financing-the-future-how-to-pay-for-turf-replacement/>
 - Turf conversion database: <https://tapin.waternow.org/turf-conversion-database/>
- HOA water wise landscapes: <https://westernresourceadvocates.org/publications/hoa-water-wise-landscapes/>
- Landscape For Life™ was developed by United States Botanic Garden and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, based on the principles of the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES®). The program is now a collaboration between Colorado State University Extension and the United States Botanic Garden. <https://landscapeforlife.colostate.edu/>
- QWEL training for landscapers: <https://www.qwel.net/>
- ULI Water Wise report: <https://knowledge.uli.org/reports/research-reports/2022/water-wise>
- Inland Empire Landscape Guidebook and Inland Empire Water Saving Garden Friendly:
<https://landscapesforliving.emwd.org/guides-resources/>

Water Wise Landscape Financial Benefits and Co-Benefits:

- Earth Economics: <https://www.eartheconomics.org/all-publications/2023/10/31/the-benefits-of-schoolyard-greening>

Fire-Smart and Water-Wise Landscaping Guidance:

- <https://www.pcwa.net/smart-water-use/fire-wise-landscaping>
- <https://firesafemarin.org/articles/how-to-be-water-wise-and-fire-smart-in-your-garden/>
- <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/calfire-fire-smart-water-wise-fact-sheet.pdf>