

# BEST PRACTICES



## Conserve Water by Installing New Plants in the Fall!

Fall is the best time of year to add new plants to your garden! The soil is still warm from the summer sun, and fall rains provide natural irrigation for your new plants.

Plants installed in the fall can have significant root growth before the ground freezes in the winter, giving them time to adjust to their new environment before the stress inducing hot summer months arrive. Additionally, cooler weather in the fall and winter leads to fewer pest and disease problems. Plants installed in the fall require fewer supplemental watering sessions during the following spring and summer months, enhancing your outdoor water conservation efforts.

When selecting plants consider Pacific Northwest native species. In addition to helping you conserve water in your yard and garden, native plants provide great habitat for wildlife passing through your yard. Native plants have adapted to our climate and environment over many thousands of years, so they are better able to survive our hot and dry summers and wet winters.

After installing your new plants, consider adding a layer of organic mulch, up to four inches thick, to your garden beds. Organic mulch will prevent erosion of top soil when the fall rains begin. Eroded top soil can flow into nearby storm drains and pollute local surface waters. Additionally, loss of top soil is bad for the health of gardens. Organic mulch is made of biodegradable material that covers soil and adds nutrients to the soil as it decomposes. Organic mulch can be purchased at most garden stores.



*Source: Stream Team News, Fall 2015*