

*beautiful*  
**waterwise**  
**gardens**

cottage

formal

mediterranean

australian native

Have the  
beautiful  
garden you  
want  
... and be  
waterwise!



# A message from the Premier



Adelaide has long had a reputation as a garden city, renowned for its beautiful parklands, landscaping and surrounds.

Gardening is an important part of the quality of life in our communities. It is also essential to tourism, recreation and leisure, which enrich South Australia's lifestyle.

Permanent water conservation measures were introduced in late 2003 highlighting the State Government's commitment to protecting our precious water resources. These measures reflect a common sense approach to water efficiency. They are simple, sensible and responsible steps we can all take.

Outdoor water use makes up more than 40% of residential water consumption, and research indicates great savings can be made if waterwise gardening techniques are applied.

Waterwise gardening means thinking about things like watering techniques, plant selection and design.

This booklet, produced by the Government of South Australia and the Nursery and Garden Industry SA, is designed to help you have the beautiful garden you want, and be waterwise.

Enjoy your garden!

**Mike Rann**  
Premier of South Australia

## Permanent water conservation measures

Permanent water conservation measures cover a range of outdoor water uses. The following apply specifically to gardens.

### **Public or private gardens, recreational areas, sports grounds or nurseries can be watered:**

- By hand (through a hand-held hose, from a bucket or watering can); or
- Through a drip-feed irrigation system; or
- Where the watering takes place through a sprinkler - after 5pm and before 10am on any day (or, when daylight saving is in force, after 6pm and before 10am).

### **No hosing down of external paved areas with water at any time unless it is absolutely necessary to do so:**

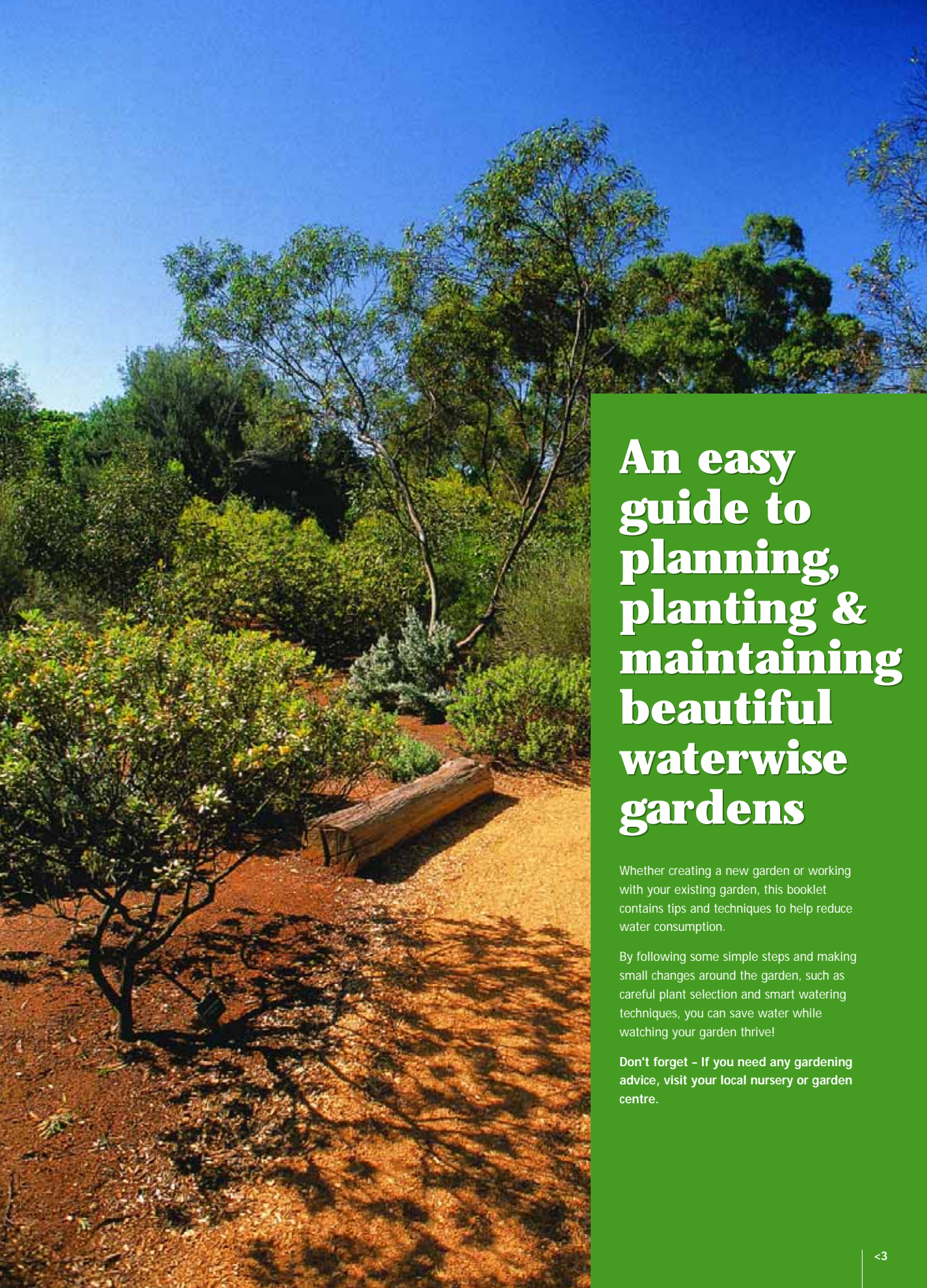
- To protect public health; or
- To ensure the safety of people using the area; or
- To ensure the health and welfare of animals using the area; or
- To deal with fire, accident or other emergency.

The Eyre Peninsula - which sources most of its supply from groundwater - remains subject to the water restrictions introduced in December 2002.

For more information about Permanent Water Conservation Measures or Eyre Peninsula Water Restrictions please visit [www.sawater.com.au](http://www.sawater.com.au) or phone 1800 130 952.

Please visit [www.sawater.com.au](http://www.sawater.com.au) for up to date information.






# **An easy guide to planning, planting & maintaining beautiful waterwise gardens**

Whether creating a new garden or working with your existing garden, this booklet contains tips and techniques to help reduce water consumption.

By following some simple steps and making small changes around the garden, such as careful plant selection and smart watering techniques, you can save water while watching your garden thrive!

**Don't forget - If you need any gardening advice, visit your local nursery or garden centre.**





## Planning a waterwise garden

- Group plants which require similar amounts of water - creating watering zones.
- Choose low water use plants which are appropriate for the soil conditions and are suited to your local area.
- When designing your garden consider using natural water capture - where will water go during high rainfall?
- Understand the site - where and when is shade created? Where is there exposure to wind? This will help you select and position plants to promote water efficiency.

## Creating ideal conditions for a waterwise garden

- Improve soil conditions to retain more moisture in the soil by adding organic material such as composts and soil conditioners. Ask your local nursery or garden centre how to improve your soil.
- Use mulch around the base of plants to minimise evaporation, maximise water retention and inhibit weed growth while protecting your plants from frost and heat.
- Keep your garden free of weeds. Weeds harbour pests and diseases, and use up valuable water!

### Did you know

You can take a soil sample to your local nursery or garden centre for testing - understanding the makeup of your soil is important for improving its conditions, and also for selecting appropriate plants.



# waterwise cottage style gardens

Originally designed for cool to temperate climates, different plants can be used to suit hotter and drier climates



Rambling and informal in layout, the cottage garden focuses on colour and foliage forms, with brightly flowering annuals, perennials, bulbs and herbs. A delight for beginners and garden enthusiasts alike, the cottage garden contains a kaleidoscope of plant types often reflecting individual personalities. The cottage garden can be characterised by timber fences, stone, mellow brickwork and wrought iron accessories.

Making the cottage garden waterwise:

- Select trees which provide shade for other plants and reduce water evaporation.
- Consider structures which provide additional shade and reduce wind exposure such as pergolas, arbours or lattice.
- Choose creeping plants which form a canopy reducing water evaporation and weed growth.
- Select waterwise plants - for example some roses are very resilient to hot climates.
- Many native and Mediterranean plants are excellent for cottage gardens.



## Michael Keelan suggests planting:

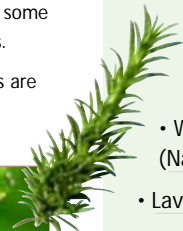
### Trees & Shrubs

- Roses
- Crabapple
- Elderberry Tree
- Crepe Myrtle
- Callistemon (Bottle Brush)

- Verbena
- Hakea

### Medium Sized Plants

- Rosemary
- Banksia Rose
- Grevillea
- Westringia (Native Rosemary)
- Lavender
- Wallflowers
- Daisies
- Asters
- Agapanthus
- Nerines
- Salvias



# waterwise formal style gardens

Characterised by a symmetrical structure, formal gardens often feature a geometric design with plants or hedging clipped into shape

The formal garden focuses on foliage textures and highlights depths and shades of green. The formal garden often includes standards, topiary, statues and water features.

Making the formal garden waterwise:

- This garden can be most water efficient if consideration is given in the early stages of planning by adopting an irrigation system suitable to its layout. For example, long narrow beds can be efficiently irrigated using a buried porous or perforated hose, or by drip irrigation.
- Minimise lawn area by creating stone, gravel or paved pathways.
- Select trees which will add visual depth to the garden and also create avenues of shade. Shaded areas will reduce evaporation from garden beds.



## Michael Keelan suggests planting:

### Hedging Plants

- Pittosporum Dahlese
- Rosemary
- Japanese Box
- Viburnum

### Trees & Shrubs

- Westringia (Native Rosemary)
- Pittosporum Euginoides
- Lagerstroemia (Crepe Myrtle)
- Conifers
- Lavender

### Low & Compact Plants

- Dwarf Lavender
- Dwarf Dianella
- Thyme







## Waterwise lawns

- Water lawns less frequently (every 7-10 days) and provide a good deep soak to encourage deeper roots and increase drought tolerance. Lawn type, climate and soil conditions will influence how much water is required - seek advice from an expert.
- The best time to water your lawn is early in the morning.
- Mow lawns to 25-50mm in height depending on the variety - the correct mowing height will create shade and insulation to the soil and roots, and minimise evaporation.
- Select a hardy, slow growing and water efficient type of lawn.
- Aerate the lawn annually, preferably in early spring - this will help water soak into the soil.
- A healthy lawn will require less water - fertilising is recommended once or twice a year, preferably in spring and autumn.
- Avoid planting lawn on steep slopes - these are more difficult to water efficiently.
- If planting a new lawn, talk to your local nursery or garden centre about soil preparation and an appropriate watering schedule. For new lawns (turf or seed) a permit must be obtained for any watering which does not comply with the permanent water conservation measures. Permit forms can be obtained from your turf grower, retailer or SA Water. The permit must then be registered by phoning 1800 130 952.

### Did you know

An alternative to lawn for a formal garden, is a grouping of low and compact evergreen plants.







## All about mulch

Mulching performs an important function in the garden – most importantly it conserves moisture in the soil, reducing the amount of water we need to apply to our gardens & pots.

- Mulch is also useful for inhibiting weed growth and making any weeds that do grow far easier to remove.
- Prior to mulching install any irrigation systems, water garden beds and pots thoroughly and apply fertilizer. Mulch needs to be applied in a layer thick enough to reduce evaporation and weed growth. Be careful to leave a clear area around the stems of your plants to prevent rot.
- Garden beds and pots can be mulched with a wide variety of products, from pebbles to organic materials such as pine bark, wood chips, lucerne, pea straw, composts, composted manures, shredded paper and straw. The most effective mulches are those that contain a variety of particle sizes from fine to coarse. The added advantage of using organic mulches is that they break down and enrich the soil, creating a moist & healthy environment for plants to grow!
- Mulches need to be topped up from time to time to maintain their effectiveness. Generally spring mulching every year will be sufficient.

## Planting in pots

- Use a premium potting mix – it has a higher water holding capacity and means you won't need to water as often.
- Select larger and deeper pots – shallow pots will be prone to greater loss of water from evaporation.

### Did you know

Potting a plant increases its maintenance requirements. Make sure your choice of pot plants suit your lifestyle and time availability.

Plus, a wetting agent can be used to help keep the soil moist for longer periods.



# waterwise mediterranean gardens



## Michael Keelan suggests planting:

### Trees & Shrubs

- Lilly Pilly
- Cacti
- Geranium
- Plumbago
- Succulents
- Carob
- Citrus
- Ficus (Fruiting Fig)
- Echium
- Westringia (Native Rosemary)

### Herbs

- Thyme
- Oregano
- Rosemary

The Mediterranean garden includes plants with vibrant colours and grey foliage against an evergreen backdrop

Mediterranean style gardens are all about outdoor living. This style is well suited to the South Australian climate and is often inspired by Spanish, Italian and Greek influences. Potted colour and terracotta are a strong feature. Shady trees or umbrellas create relaxed areas within walled gardens and courtyards. A simple water feature can add tranquillity to the garden.

Making the Mediterranean garden waterwise:

- Choose plants from a Mediterranean climate - they have already adapted to our climatic conditions and will thrive with minimal water.
- Create shade - it is nature's way of saving water and is important in the sun drenched Mediterranean garden, for plants and people.





# waterwise australian native gardens

**Plants which are native to Australia are well suited to existing soil climatic conditions - they thrive naturally & are low maintenance**

The native garden is characterised by bold colours, aromatic foliage, and often includes rocks and rustic features for added interest.

Due to striking foliage forms and simple lines, the native garden is becoming more popular in modern gardens.

Making the native garden waterwise:

- Consider plants which are local to your area - these will best suit the natural environment.
- Ensure plants selected are suitable to your garden's soil type.
- Not all native plants are suitable to all conditions - some are classified as weeds outside their place of origin. Check with your local nursery or garden centre.



## Michael Keelan suggests planting:

### Trees & Shrubs

- Callistemon (Bottle Brush)
- Grevillea
- Correa
- Acacia (Wattle)
- Kangaroo Paw
- Westringia (Native Rosemary)
- Dianella (Native flax)
- Eucalypt (Gum Tree)
- Hakea





## Did you know

Most native plants can be pruned after flowering. Pruning promotes new healthy growth, water efficiency and more flowers!

## Irrigating techniques

- The amount of water used in your garden can be reduced by up to 75% by choosing an efficient irrigation system.
- Consult with your local nursery or garden centre about choosing a watering technique which best suits your garden. For a more detailed system, consult with an irrigation specialist.
- Tap timers can be useful if used correctly – set an appropriate time limit for watering and turn off during rain.
- Use irrigation components that apply water as close as possible to the roots of the plant, & with the largest droplet size as practicable.
- Dripper irrigation systems will efficiently supply water to your plants, delivering single droplets which will soak into the soil & reduce evaporation.
- Wider or longer garden beds can be cost effectively watered using perforated and porous hoses (leaky hose). These can be buried under mulch or soil to deliver an even amount of water to the entire garden bed (or lawns).
- If watering by hose, use a trigger nozzle to save water as you move around the garden – follow permanent water conservation measures!

## When to water

- A simple test is to press your finger into the soil past your first knuckle - if the soil is damp it does not need watering.
- Train your plants to be waterwise – water for a little longer but less frequently to encourage deeper roots and increase the drought tolerance of your plants.
- Watch your plants – looking for signs on how the plant is responding to your watering methods. Ensure they receive adequate water, but remember people waste water - not plants.
- Water in the coolest part of the morning or evening – avoid watering when windy or hot. Follow permanent water conservation measures.





# About the Nursery & Garden Industry (SA)

Nursery & Garden Industry (SA) is the peak industry body providing leadership in technical, industrial and commercial services and advice to its members.

NGI (SA) represents all sectors of the industry including producers, wholesalers, retailers, allied traders and consultants. Along with the national NGI body, its goal is to 'Build Better Businesses' by helping and supporting members to improve their profit, performance and professionalism.

To find out more about NGIA (SA) visit [www.ngia.com.au](http://www.ngia.com.au) and click on "Your Associations" or phone (08) 8372 6822.

For more information on creating your ideal waterwise garden visit [www.sawater.com.au](http://www.sawater.com.au)



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It's in your hands



SA Water