

Xeriscaping & Water-wise Gardens

Buffalo Garden & Rural Living Expo
March 18, 2023

Micah Most, Johnson Co. Extension



A note on the word

Xeriscape → “Zehr-ih-scape”

Term created by Denver Water

Greek “xeri” dry + “scape” scene

- NOT ZERO-scape

Xeriscape = water-wise



**DENVER
WATER**

ZERO-scaping



ZERO-scaping



XERIScaping



XERIscaping



Audubon of the Rockies
Ag Research and Learning Center
Casper, WY

What are your goals?

- Conserve water
- Provide pollinator habitat
- “Save the bees”
- Spend less time and effort to maintain
- Aesthetics
- What else?



Brenna Marsicek

Reasons to Consider

- Reduce water use
- Encourages use of native plants
 - Tolerant of WY soils
 - Supports native pollinators
- Work *with* nature instead of *against*
- Save time and money



Brenna Marsicek

Ecosystem Template

Shortgrass prairie, alpine meadow



Temper expectations, we are not the rainforest

LANDSCAPING: WATER-WISE WYOMING GARDENS



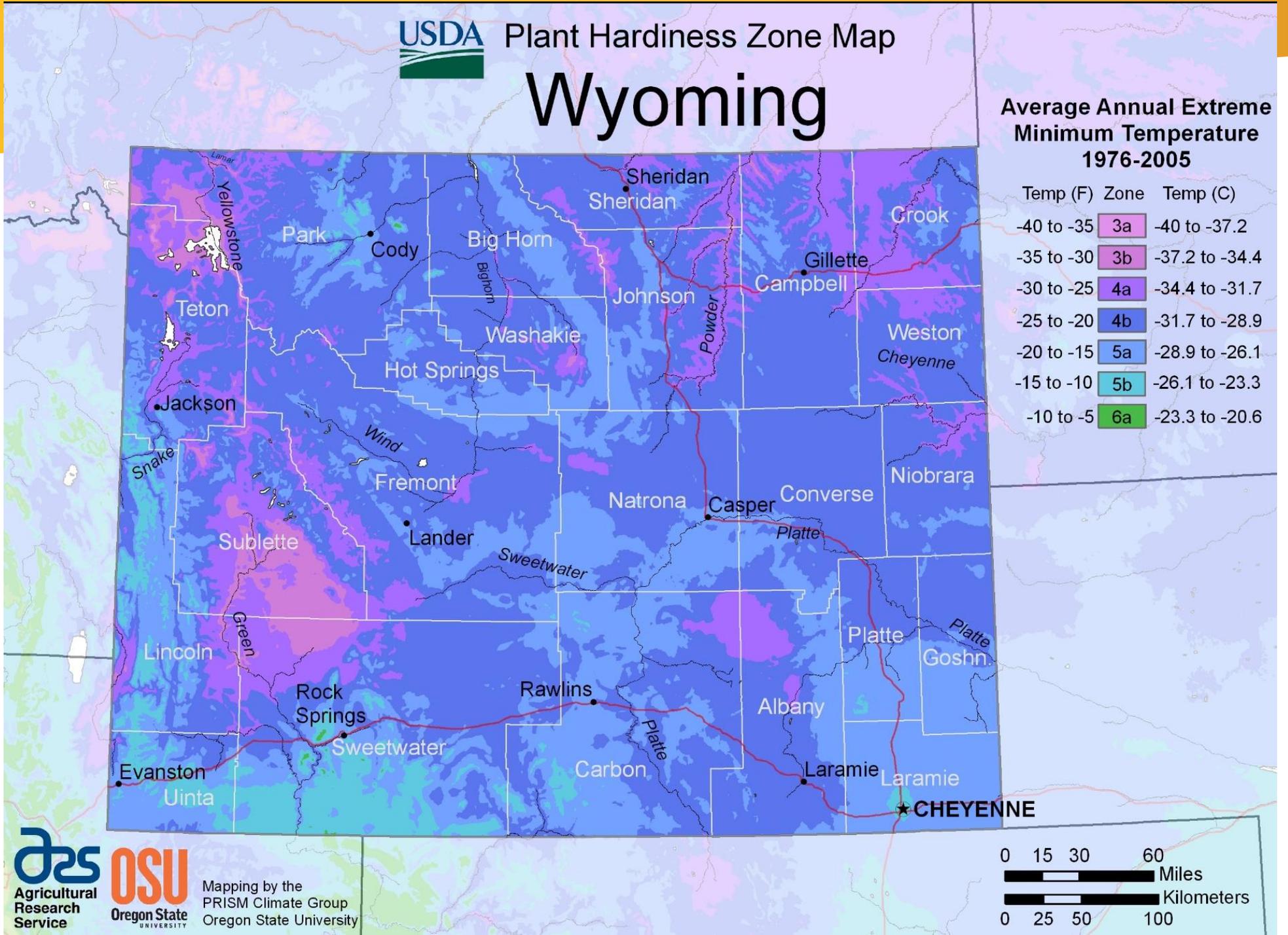
Xeriscape



Wyoming

Average Annual Extreme Minimum Temperature 1976-2005

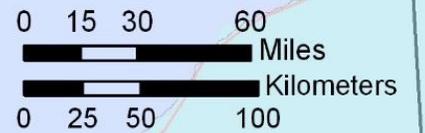
Temp (F)	Zone	Temp (C)
-40 to -35	3a	-40 to -37.2
-35 to -30	3b	-37.2 to -34.4
-30 to -25	4a	-34.4 to -31.7
-25 to -20	4b	-31.7 to -28.9
-20 to -15	5a	-28.9 to -26.1
-15 to -10	5b	-26.1 to -23.3
-10 to -5	6a	-23.3 to -20.6



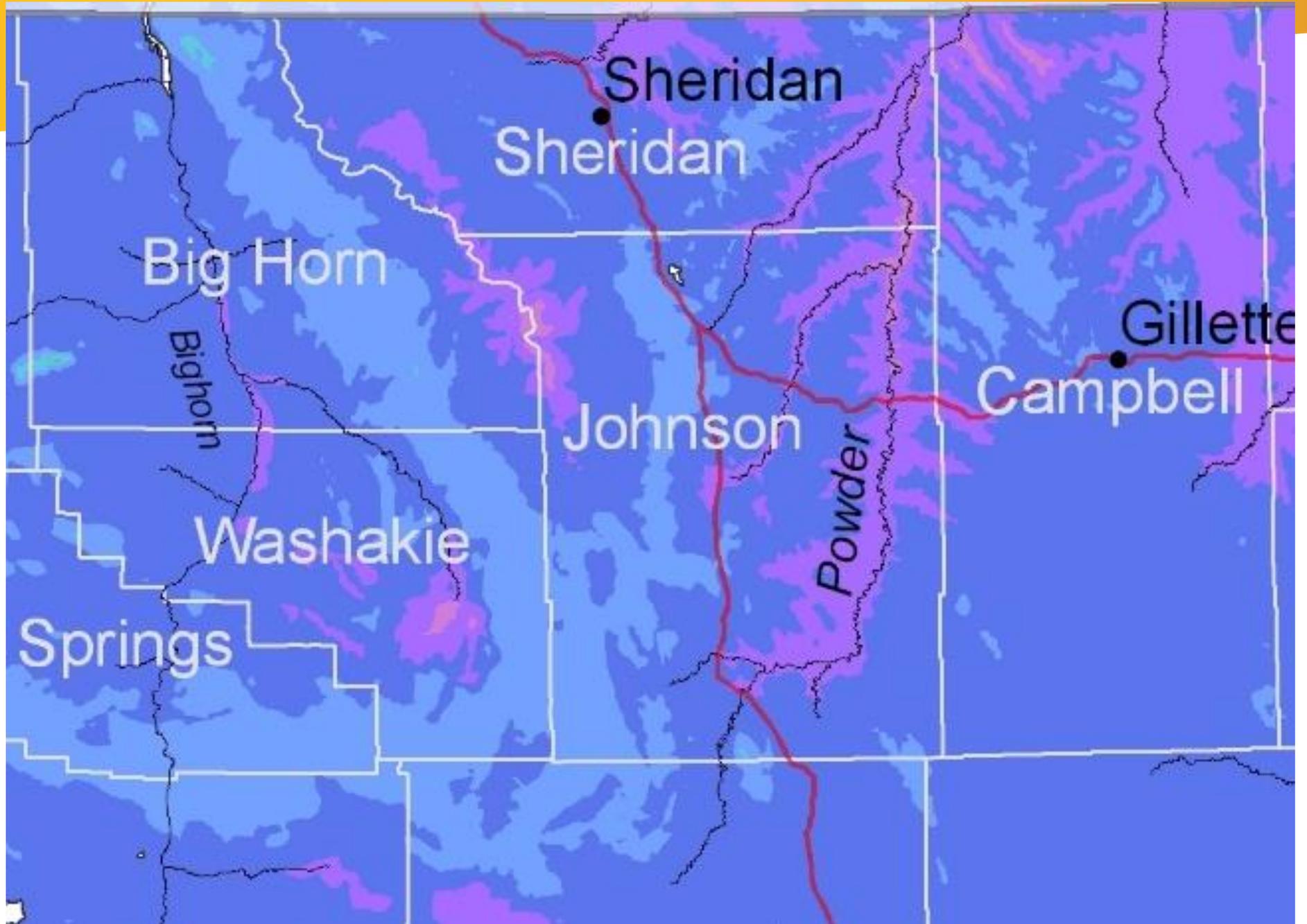
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Johnson County



Mapping by the
PRISM Climate Group
Oregon State University

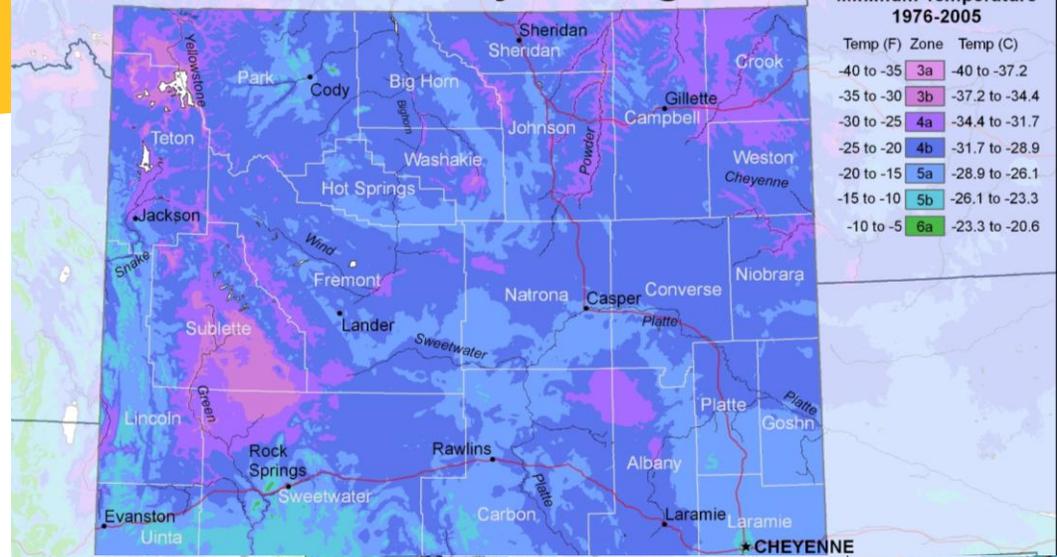


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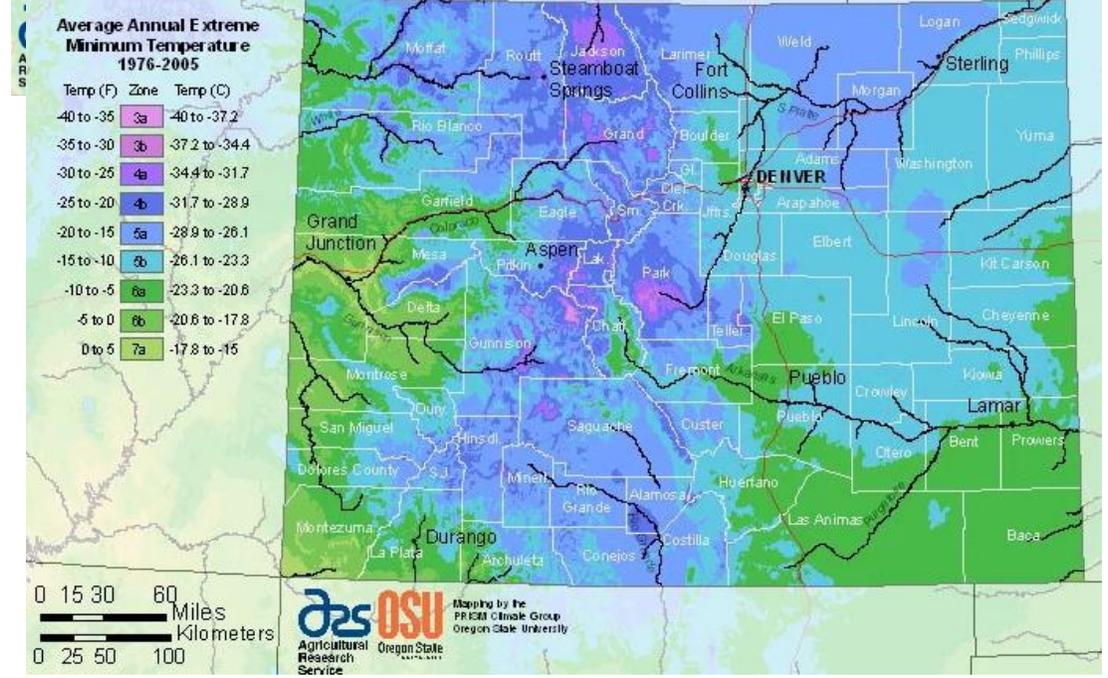
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USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map
Wyoming



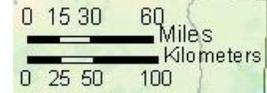
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-15 to -10 5b	-26.1 to -23.3
-10 to -5 6a	-23.3 to -20.6
-5 to 0 6b	-20.6 to -17.8
0 to 5 7a	-17.8 to -15



OSU Mapping by the PRISM Climate Group Oregon State University
 Agricultural Research Service



Extension
 Johnson County

LANDSCAPING: WATER-WISE WYOMING GARDENS



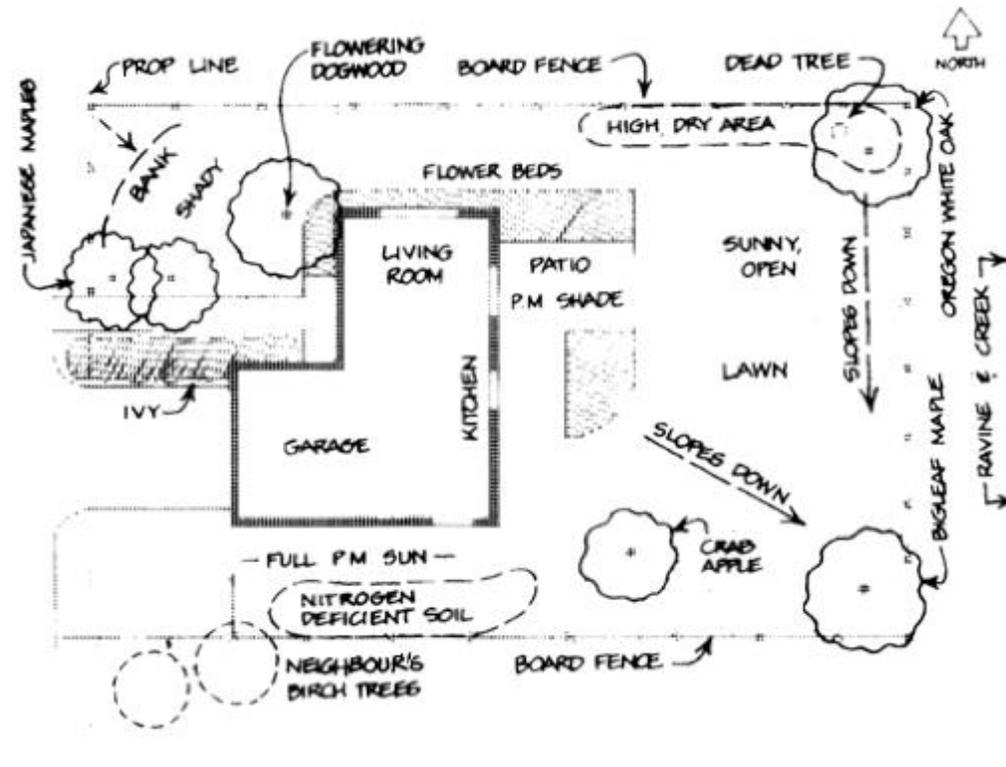
Xeriscape

1- Developing a Landscape Plan

Landscape Plan

Consider

- Exposure
- Prevailing winds
- Water sources
- Existing infrastructure above and below ground
 - Power, phone, internet, sewer



Call 811



2- Limit Turf Areas

Turf grasses are thirsty

- Demand a lot of water to stay green
- Not native
- Not adapted
- Management intensive



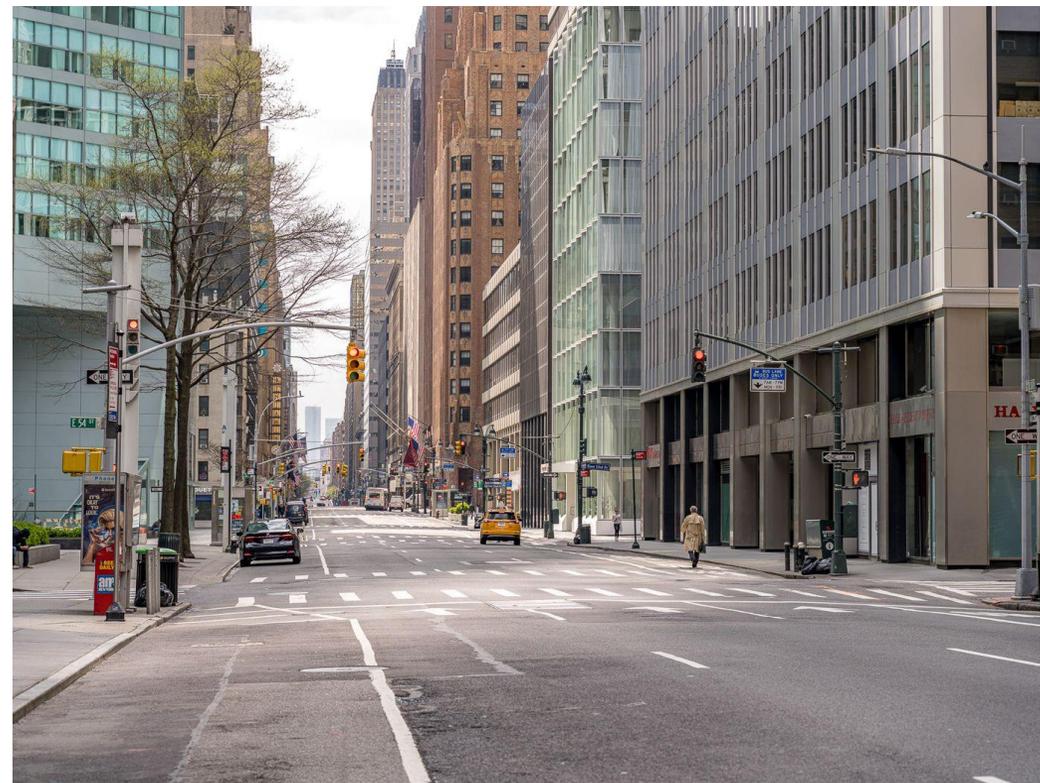
This Old House

- Limit to smaller area
 - Determine child/pet requirement
- Use curving borders to make mowing easier

To the pollinator . . .



=



Traditional Turf Alternatives

DOG TUFF™ GRASS PLUGS PRONUNCIATION



 4.4 58 Reviews [Write a Review](#)

Dog Tuff™ Grass (Cynodon 'PWIN04S') is an amazing, highly drought-resistant lawn grass perfect for high traffic and play areas. It has excellent durability in yards with dogs and is resistant to yellowing from dog urine. Once established, this warm-season grass is highly weed resistant, deep-rooted and provides a soft, cushioned feel for bare feet. It only grows 2 ½-4 inches high, so you need not mow it unless you prefer a manicured look. **2015 Green Thumb Award Winner.**

Zones  5 - 10

Advantages  Groundcover

Light Requirements  Full Sun

Water Tolerance  Xeric

Traditional Turf Alternatives

Clover Lawn

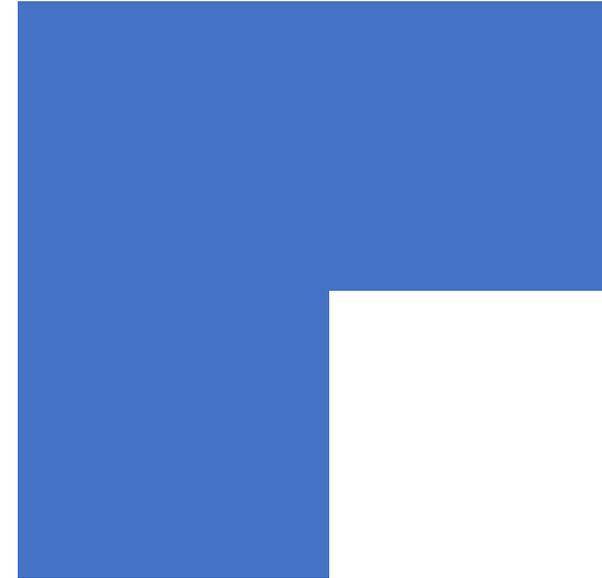
- Aerate
- Overseed with clover
- Pollinator friendly



3- Selecting and Zoning Plants Appropriately

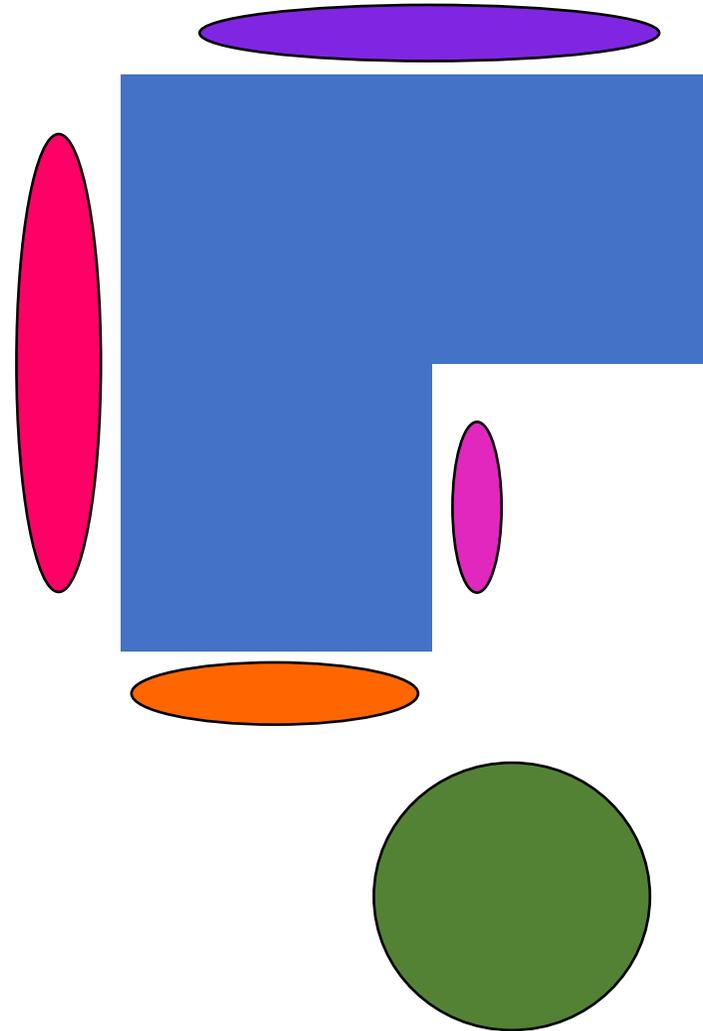
Microclimates

Defined: “The suite of microclimatic conditions measured in localized areas near the earth’s surface”

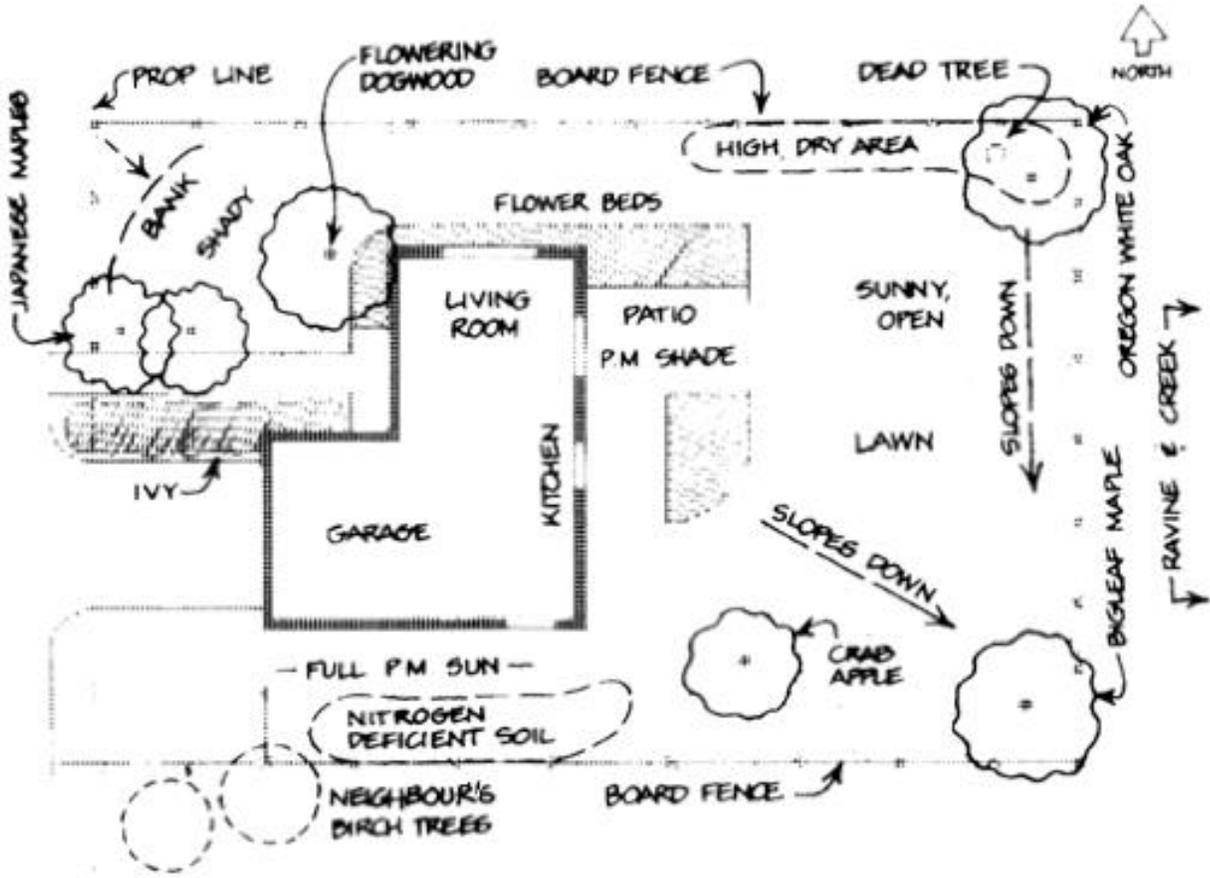


Microclimates

- Full sun, hot, dry
- Morning shade, afternoon sun, hot
- Morning sun, afternoon shade, cool
- Full shade, cool, wet



Microclimates



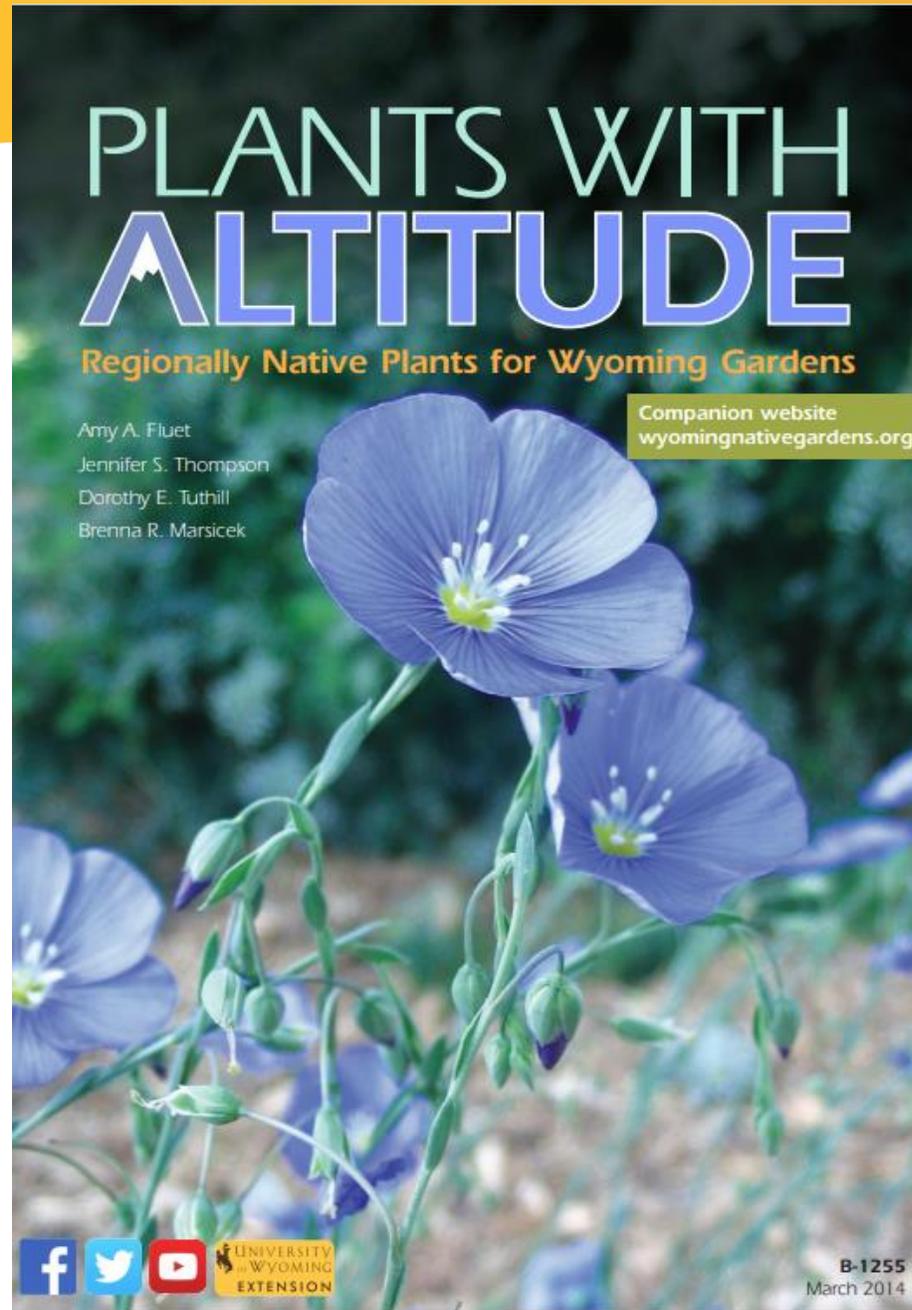
Further Reading

- Online as pdf

\$5.00 + shipping

~\$4.02 to ship to Buffalo

= \$9.27



Further Reading

- Online as pdf

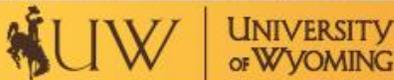


Further Reading

- Online as pdf

LANDSCAPING: RECOMMENDED TREES FOR WYOMING

Karen Panter & Chris Hilgert,
Department of Plant Sciences

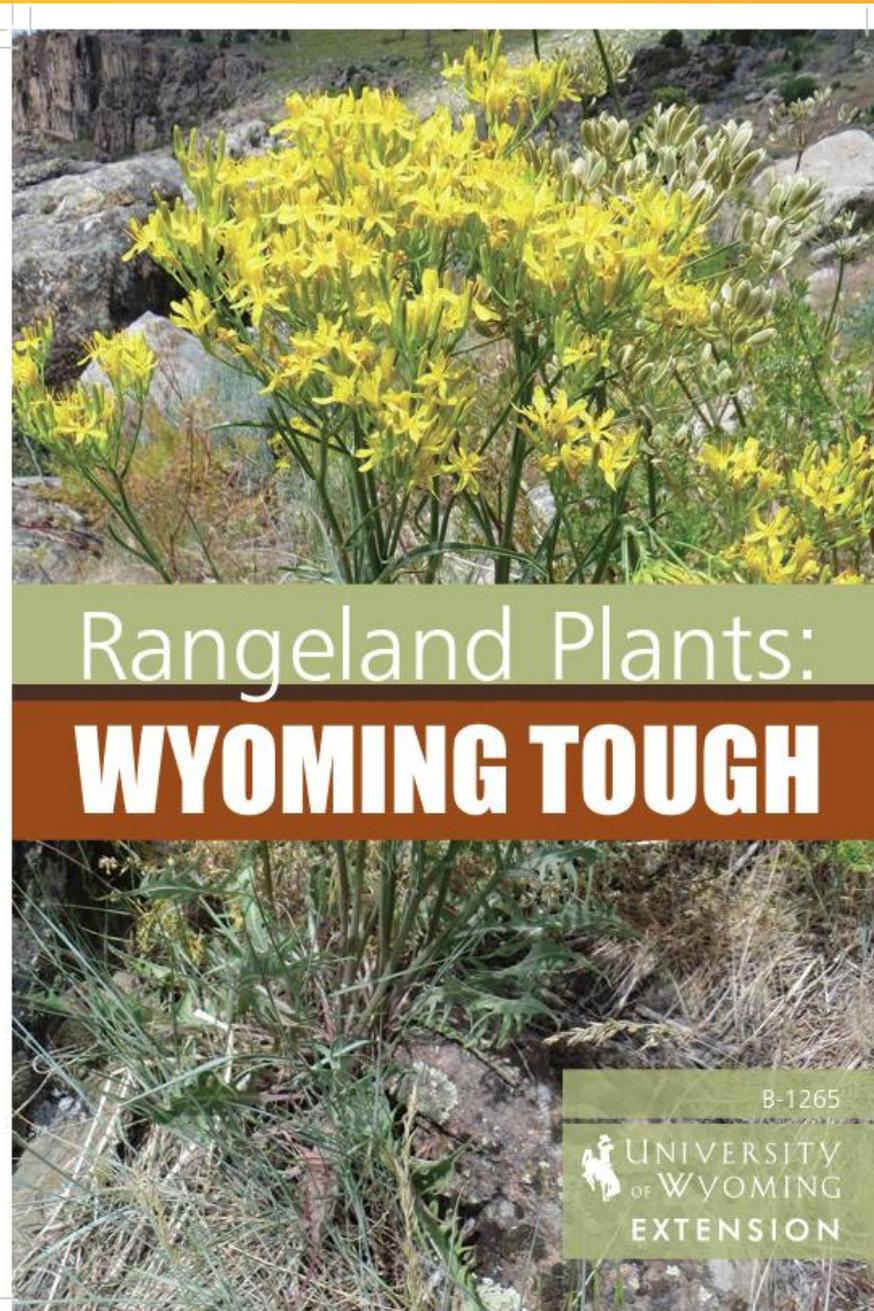


B-1090R
December 2015

[Return to UW Extension publications site.](#)

Further Reading

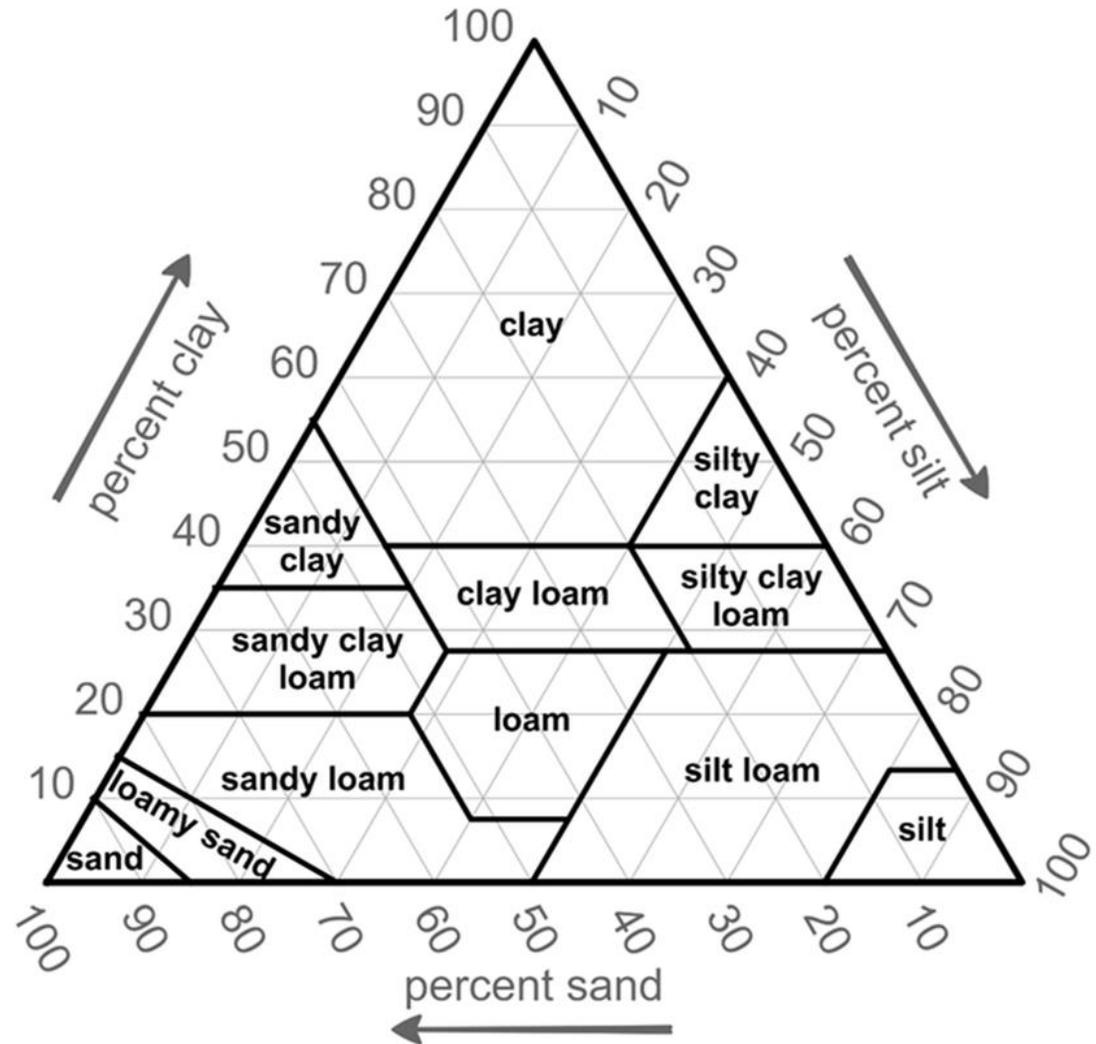
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4- Improving the Soil

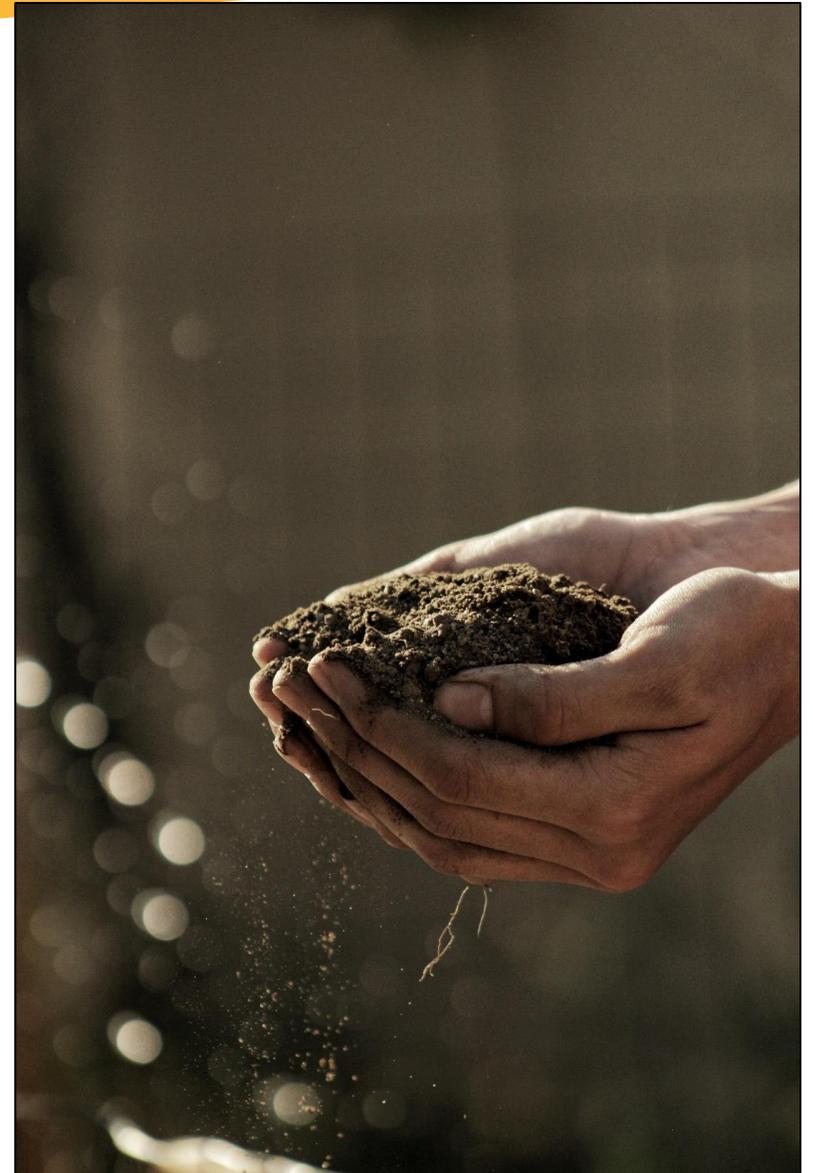
Wyoming Soils

- High pH (alkaline)
- Saline



Soil Testing

- In Buffalo → Clear Creek Conservation District
 - Quart size Ziplock
 - Representative sample
 - 307-620-3021
- Extension office can help interpret results



5- Using Mulches

Why mulch?

- Retain water/reduce evaporation
- Limit weed invasion
- Moderate temperature swings
- Add organic matter



Twin Oaks Landscape

What kind of mulch?

- Plant material – improves soil
 - Wood chips
 - Grass clippings – watch for herbicide residue
 - Leaves
- Compost – improves soil
 - Know your source
 - Weed seeds if not hot composted
 - Manure good if aged well
- Rocks/gravel
 - Retain heat



6- Irrigating Efficiently

Water-wise \neq no watering

- Target water to plants
 - Drip system
 - Soaker hose
- Reduce evaporation loss
 - Water during coolest hours:
night or early morning
 - Do not water when very windy
- Adjust sprinkler heads
 - Fix if broken

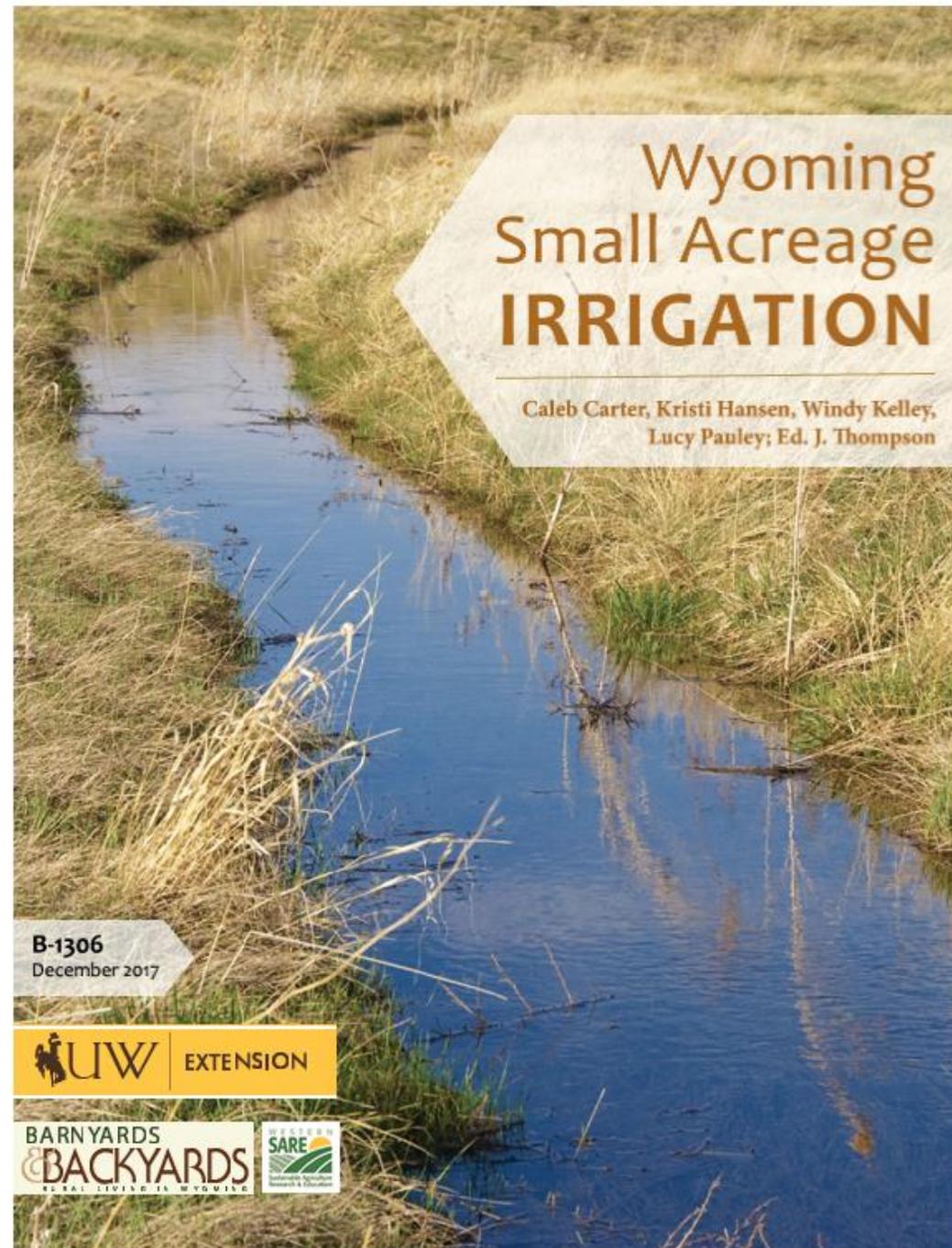


Water-wise \neq no watering

- Group plants by water needs
- Use a timer



- Online as pdf



7- Maintaining Properly

Low maintenance \neq no maintenance

- Baby plants first year as they get established
- Weeding
- Deadheading
- Thinning
- Fertilizing
- Occasional mowing

So . . . What to plant??

... It depends.

- Property goals
- Hardiness zone
- Exposure
- Soils
- Water access



Looking for inspiration?



- Pay attention to what grows well in local natural spaces
- Walk around your neighborhood and check out yard spaces
- Casper ARLC Gardens
- Cheyenne Botanic Gardens

- **COMING SOON!** Visit the water-wise landscape bed at the Buffalo Community Garden

Looking for inspiration?



The Garden Store



Alpine Glow

Full Sun | 72 sqft | 23 starter plants



Colorado Oasis

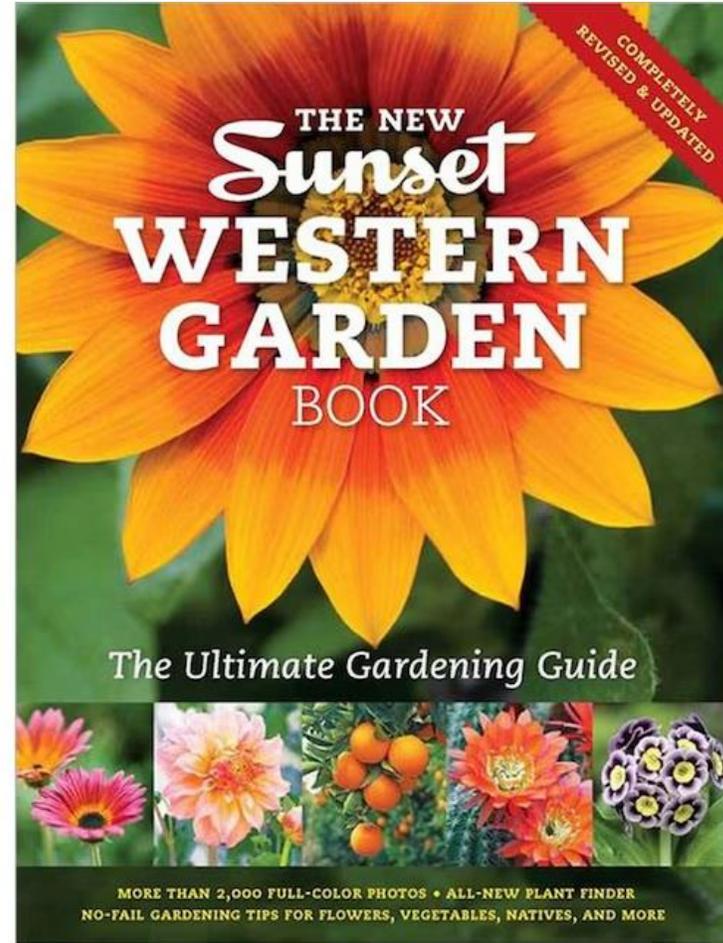
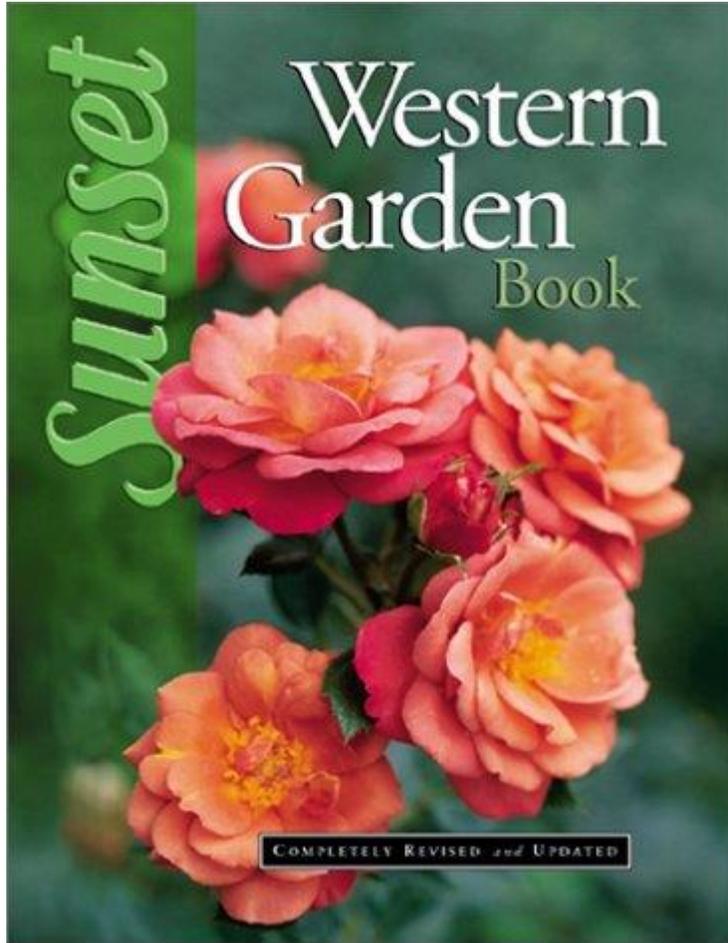
Adaptable | 60 sqft | 15 starter plants



Curbside Charm

Full Sun | 100 sqft | 28 starter plants

Looking for inspiration?



Extension
Johnson County

Resources

- Plants with Altitude – UW Extension
- Landscaping: Recommended Shrubs for WY – UW Extension
- Rangeland Plants: WY Tough – UW Extension
- Piney Island Native Plants – Sheridan, WY
- Wyoming Plant Company – Casper, WY
- Cheyenne Botanic Gardens
- High Country Gardens – Colorado
- Plant Select – Colorado



BARNYARDS & BACKYARDS

RURAL LIVING IN WYOMING



Follow along on social media!

@ UW Extension Johnson County



Upcoming Events

- **Wyoming Bee College**

- March 24-25th in Cheyenne
- wyomingbeecollege.org
- cwissner@uwyo.edu

- **Country Living: An Intro to Small Acreage Living**

- April 8th in Buffalo
- Amanda @ CCCD
- 307-620-3021

Thanks for listening



Johnson County Extension

QUESTIONS?

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