Rain water can be collected, stored, and used as a supplemental water source. Depending on one’s needs, rainwater can be stored in large quantities in cisterns or in small quantities in a rain barrel. During a 1-inch rain event, 500 to 600 gallons of rain water can be collected for every 1,000 square feet of roof area.

Rain gardens are shallow depressions planted with native and other plants that soak up rainwater or melted snow from your rooftop, driveway, and lawn. These select plants can withstand both wet and dry conditions. Rain gardens allow water to infiltrate into the soil rather than becoming runoff. Well drained soils are required for rain gardens, and must drain in less than 48 hours. If native soils do not meet this requirement, they should be replaced or amended to a depth of 3 to 4 feet. In some applications, a subsurface drainage pipe is necessary.

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**PRINCIPLES OF XERISCAPE GARDENING**

*Start with a Good Design*
Many people create their own designs with excellent results. You may want to have a professional check your plans, or complete the entire design. Begin with a sketch (1/4 inch = 1 foot), showing your home and property. Consider slopes, soils, aspect (direction of slope), drainage, limited areas of turf, privacy areas, play areas, etc. Plants need to complement the site and structure, as well as look great and save water.

*Improve the Soil*
For best results, add 3 to 5 cubic yards of organic material per 1,000 square feet of planting area and rototill to 6 inches deep. If you like, the Oklahoma County Extension Office will help you have your soil analyzed.

*Practical Turf Areas*
Turf is important to the landscape, but it can have a significant water requirement. A reduction in the total amount of traditional lawn, targeting practical and essential areas based on function and aesthetics, will have a corresponding reduction in water use. Selecting the right species is also very important. Turfgrasses vary in their need for irrigation. Common turfgrass species used in Oklahoma in order of water needs from highest to lowest include: cool-season grasses (tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, and ryegrass), hybrid bermudagrass and zoysiagrass, common bermudagrass, and buffalograss. In most cases cool-season grasses are not recommended for full sun areas; however, they may be an appropriate selection for shady areas.

*Use Mulches Effectively*
Mulch covers soil, saves moisture, reduces weed growth, and adds interest. It should be spread about 3 inches deep over soil. Avoid using solid sheet plastic. Mulch areas cost about the same as turf and look best when plants are used to cover a major part of the mulched area. Nursery people can tell you more about mulch.

*Use Irrigation Effectively and Efficiently*
Plan to irrigate turf areas separately from other plantings. Use a zone irrigation system that groups the plants according to their water requirements. Drip irrigation can help save water and reduce weed growth.

*Practice Good Maintenance*
Maintenance preserves the intended beauty of the landscape, and it saves water. Proper mowing height, fertilizing, pruning, and weeding all help promote a healthy garden. Fine tune your irrigation system, and follow recommended lawn watering guidelines.

**What are the Water Use Zones?**
The Bickham-Rudkin Park Xeriscape Garden incorporates three water use zones. The very low zone provides for a considerable savings in water use and maintenance compared to a traditional irrigated landscape. A low water zone provides reasonable water savings. A moderate water zone is the highest use zone in the garden. Irrigation is applied at a rate that allows for optimum and luxurious plant growth, while still employing the concepts of XERISCAPE. The map in this brochure shows the zones in our garden.

**Choose Low Water Demanding Plants**
Scores of species are available. Colorful flowers, trees, shrubs, and attractive ground covers will complement your Xeriscape. Turf requiring less water is also available.

**Water Use Zone Map**