

# WATER CONSERVATION REBATE PROGRAM

## Planting Guide



### Why drought tolerant and deer resistant plants? .....

We live in an area where the demand for potable (tap) water is on the rise, and at times our water supply can be unpredictable due to our changing climate. Yard use can account for an increase of up to 30% in potable water demand in the summer months. We also live in an area with a significant mule deer population who love to eat our garden plants. By gardening with plants they don't like, you save money and add curb appeal.

#### Save money and conserve water long-term

Drought-tolerant plants are an excellent way to conserve water on your property. These perennials use approximately 40-60% less water than a lawn or standard gardenscape.

Note: Refer to the Government of Alberta's [invasive plant species](#) list for common invasive plants that can have negative effects on the local natural ecosystem. Please remove them from your yard and place in the garbage.

### Tips for rebate success with drought tolerant plants .....

Please refer to the Principles for Garden Success on the next pages to ensure your gardening efforts are successful and your plants thrive.



- Please note: pay close attention to the latin plant name to ensure it matches the drought-tolerant plant list. Take a high quality photo of each plant in its pot with the plant identifier tag beside or in front of the plant. Photos of groups of 3 plants are permissible, if all tags are legible
- After planting, mulch the area with 2 inches of mulch in order to prevent water from evaporating. (Note: mulching is a requirement for this rebate.)
- Trees need to have 3-4 inches of mulch around the base of the trunk and surrounding root circumference. Be careful not to cover the base of the trunk on trees and shrubs to avoid decay and rodent problems.
- Take a photo of the plants in their new garden space. If a medium to large space was established, please take several photos of sections of the garden.
- Highlight and label the eligible plant items on your receipt; this is especially important if you bought other plants that are not eligible for the rebate at the same time.
- Please note: plants put in pots and planters are not included in the rebate program.

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### Principles for Garden Success

Protect your garden investment by making sure that your new plants will survive and thrive in your yard. A few simple steps will ensure that your plants come back year after year.



## 1 Get to know your yard

Before you purchase any plants, make notes regarding the conditions around your yard:

- Which areas of the yard are sunny or in shade?
- Which areas offer shelter from the wind?
- What are the soil conditions when the ground is dry?
- Typically, soil in Okotoks contains a lot of clay or sand. You may need to amend your soil if it is too sandy, or is hard and full of clay. Sandy soil allows water to drain too easily, while clay soil is slow to drain water. Both of these soil types make it difficult for plants to thrive.
- Try the press-test: take a quarter-sized amount of soil in your palm and press it down with your thumb:
- If the soil stays extremely loose and does not hold a shape, it contains a high percentage of sand.
- If the soil keeps the shape of your thumb and does not easily crumble when moved, it contains a high percentage of clay.
- If the soil keeps the shape of your thumb initially but crumbles when you move it, it is a good loam soil.
- Adding some compost is a great way to add movement and nutrients to difficult soil. Employees at a local garden centre can answer your questions about soil, sun and shelter requirements.



## 2 Harvest free rainwater

- Save money on your utility bill - use a rain barrel or two to capture rain water. Your plants and wallet will thank you!
- Don't forget that rain barrels are part of the rebate program too. Or...
- Filled up the kiddy pool? Use that water for your plants!

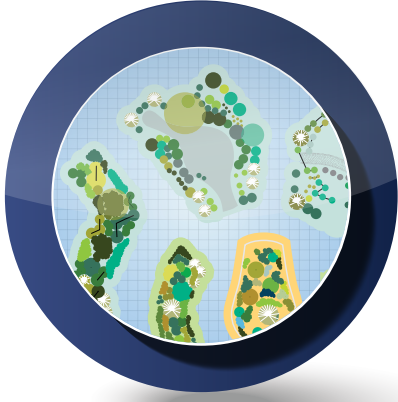


## 3 Match plants with yard conditions

Select plants from the rebate drought tolerant plant list that would grow well in the conditions your yard offers.

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### 4 Map your yard

- Using graph paper to sketch your yard space, sun and soil conditions, slopes and water drainage, and where plants can go is a great way to map out and plan your garden
- Decide where plants should go based on their sun and soil demands, and grow plants with similar growing needs together.
- Before planting trees or large shrubs, make sure you know where your utility lines are. Visit [albertaonecall.com](http://albertaonecall.com)



### 5 Mulch

- After you have finished planting, add a 2-inch layer of mulch in the garden while leaving an inch around the plant stock.
- Mulch is a layer of organic materials (shredded bark or wood) that will help the soil to retain moisture and help to keep out weeds.



### 6 Plant after-care

- Your new drought tolerant garden will require more water (2-3 times a week, depending on heat and rain) during the first year that it is being established in your yard. This may seem counterintuitive; however watering well during the first season will make sure the root system is healthy enough to survive with reduced water.
- Next year, once the plants are established and mulched well, the watering needs will diminish substantially.
- Use a natural fertilizer every two weeks when watering the establishing plants.
- Ask your local greenhouse about eco-friendly fertilizers or make your own.

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# Raising the Canopy

## Right tree. Right location.

Now that you are ready to 'raise the canopy' with your new tree, let's look at how you can ensure your tree is planted in the right place and in the right way. Following this guideline is the best way to have a healthy tree that will live for a long time in your yard.

### Step 1



#### Groundwork

Canada is divided into nine major zones, with the harshest weather zone being 0 and the mildest being 8.

**Okotoks is considered to be Zone 3a to 4a.**

Understanding your zone helps you determine what trees will grow best in your yard.



### Step 2



#### Types of tree

**Deciduous** trees lose leaves in fall, new leaves grow in the spring. **Coniferous** trees are evergreen and have needle-like leaves they keep year-round.

##### Deciduous



**Fruit or flowering trees:** smaller sized, grown for decorative purposes



**Shade trees:** larger sized with a large canopy of leaves



**Columnar trees:** narrow, tall trees that take up less space

##### Coniferous



**Coniferous trees:** year round ever green

See the Water Conservation Rebate Plant List for a list of trees included in the program.



# WATER CONSERVATION REBATE PROGRAM

## Planting Guide

### Step 3



#### BEFORE YOU DIG:

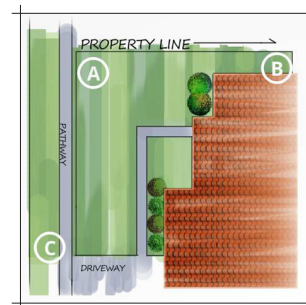
Contact Alberta One-Call to locate any public underground lines. 1-800-243-3447 or [albertaonecall.com](http://albertaonecall.com)

### Where to plant

Draw a basic map of your yard. Using your map, have a look up, down and all around.

#### Consider:

- tree size at maturity
- neighbours
- other structures (garage, shed etc.)
- shade or sun growing conditions
- utilities: consult your real property report for property lines and right of ways. Planting within the right of way (ur/w) is not permitted. This includes power, water, sewer, fiber, gas, overland drainage right of ways, and utility right of ways.

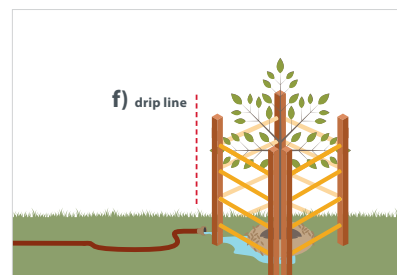
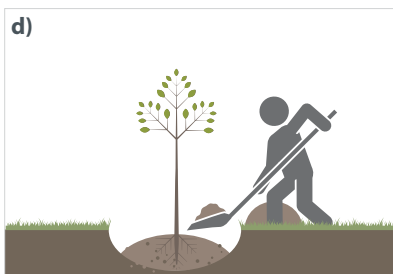
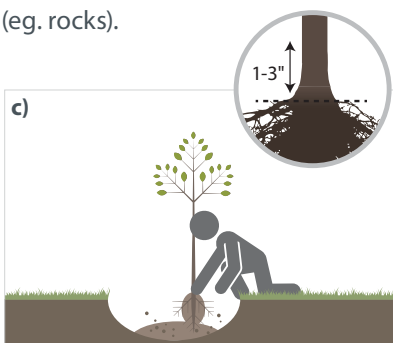
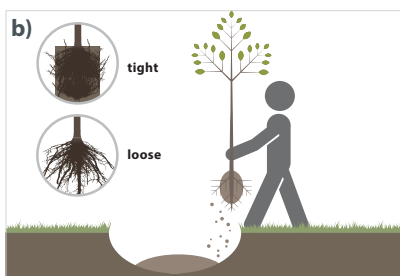


### Step 4



### How to plant

- Dig a hole that is the depth of the root ball and **2-3X the width**.
- Massage the root ball to loosen the roots. This helps prevent roots from strangling the tree.
- Place tree in hole. The root collar/flare should be above the ground by one to three inches.
- Backfill the hole half-way, pack soil lightly to remove air pockets, then straighten the tree. Do not add anything to the hole "for drainage" (eg. rocks).
- Fill the rest of the hole and compact lightly. Mulch away from the trunk around the tree in a donut shape. No more than three inches deep, and spread away from the tree as wide as possible.
- Water (slow trickle) at the drip line for approximately 20 minutes or until soil is moist. Water your new tree weekly for 30 minutes on a trickle at the drip line. Install tree protection fencing at, or just outside, the dripline.



Thank you to the City of Calgary for the use of content and graphics.

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### Your tree, year round.

#### Safety



##### Safety First.

Always wear personal protective equipment that's right for the job: gloves, eye protection and proper footwear.

When in doubt, call a professional. A certified arborist knows best tree care practices.

[www.isa-arbor.com](http://www.isa-arbor.com)



safety glasses  
ear protection

gloves

boots

#### Pruning



Less is more. In Okotoks' climate most trees do not need much pruning.

Avoid pruning when you plant a new tree – unless you're removing dead branches.

Dead or diseased branches can be pruned at any time of the year unless the tree is an Elm.

**Elms cannot legally be pruned from April 1 to September 30 to help prevent the spread of Dutch Elm Disease.**



#### Mulch



**Mulch helps retain water and insulate roots.**

Mulch should be **3 inches deep**, kept away from the trunk, and spread out as wide as possible in a doughnut shape.

It can be replenished every three to five years.



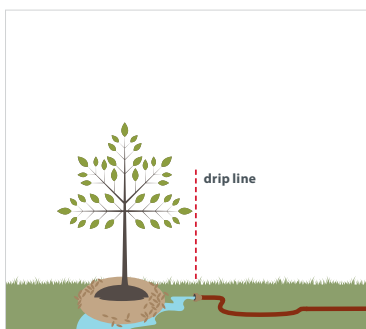
#### Watering



##### New tree

**less than 3 years old**

Put your hose at the drip line, **water weekly for 30 minutes** on a trickle.



##### Mature tree

**more than 3 years old**

Water your tree during drought periods using trickle irrigation at, and around, the drip line.

Put your hose at the drip line, **water weekly to biweekly for 30 minutes** on a trickle.

