

Steele: Spring brings out the gardeners



By Kelowna Capital News

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Spring is here—the daylight hours are rapidly increasing and gardeners are eagerly putting outside.

Some, like me, lose track of time so dinner is eaten later with every lengthening day.

After last year's intense heat and long drought, many more gardeners are making changes to their landscapes to be prepared for watering restrictions.

The Okanagan Xeriscape Association has many resources help with conversion of existing landscapes and for those creating a new landscape.

Much of that information can be found on our website okanaganxeriscape.org.

It includes a summary of the Seven Principles of Xeriscape; a Landscape Assessment Tool; classes and events; resource lists of books, other websites and demonstration gardens; and a photo gallery.

To help select plants appropriate for your garden conditions, the searchable plant database has more than 400 plant listings with 23 search categories. Some valley nurseries have listings on the water-wise plants they sell, making it easier to find the plants on your wish list before you go shopping.

This spring, I will be teaching three sessions of the popular two-night Introduction to the Seven Principles of Xeriscape" class: Wednesday, March 29, and April 5 (almost full); Thursday, April 14 and 21; and Wednesday, May 4 and 11.

Details about the class and registration information are on the Classes page of the website where you will also find a short video of me explaining xeriscape.

Mark your calendars:

1) If you are looking for good quality, heirloom or organic seeds, make sure you get to Seedy Saturday, March 19. It's in the Atrium at

Okanagan College from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Seed Co will be selling local wild flower seeds including milkweed.

OXA will have a booth where our members will answer questions and sell memberships and class registrations.

Flower Power Garden Tour, June 18, will have tickets for sale at a special early-bird rate.

2) The Okanagan Basin Water Board is putting on its free annual public forum, celebrating UN World Water Day-Canada Water Week on March 22, 6 to 8:30 p.m., at the Laurel Packinghouse in Kelowna, 1304 Ellis St.

exSTREAMS: The Okanagan Water Story and You, looks at our valley's droughts and floods from a historical First Nation perspective, how Okanagan communities are working together to address these, and how individuals can be part of that effort.

3) Wednesday, April 6, Kelowna Garden Club guest speaker, Fearon Blair, will present Gardening with Pollinators, 7 p.m., at First Lutheran Church, 4091 Lakeshore Rd.

4) Saturday April 30, OXA's annual Xeriscape Plant Sale at the unH2O Garden, 4075 Gordon Dr., in front of the H2O Aquatic Centre, from 9a.m. to noon.

And watch for my column on Fridays in the *Kelowna Capital News* and online at kelownacapnews.com from now through November.

Find this article at:

<http://www.kelownacapnews.com/news/372427271.html>