



Gwen Steele Snowdrops and winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*), are the first spring bulbs to bloom. They are a welcome, cheery sight after winter. Both self-seed to naturalize well in lawns and flower beds.

## The xeriscape way: Making changes in the garden

Kelowna columnist Marjorie Horne talks about ways to garden and conserve water

Mar. 25, 2018 10:00 a.m. / COLUMNISTS / OPINION



By Gwen Steele

Spring officially arrived this week. Eager gardeners may finally be able to garden without the threat of yet another snowfall.

After last year's intense heat and drought, many people are making changes to their landscapes to prepare for watering restrictions.

This frequently involves replacing large landscaped areas with rock mulch. It reflects heat back onto buildings, will be a haven for weeds, and can look very stark.

The Okanagan Xeriscape Association's (OXA) goal is to offer information and guidance to help people to create beautiful water-wise landscapes. Xeriscape is not synonymous with rock mulch. Xeriscaping is a method of gardening successfully with the climate.

Almost any style of gardening can be achieved using the principles of xeriscape. Much xeriscape information, to help with conversion of existing landscapes and for creating a new landscape, can be found on the website [www.okanaganxeriscape.org](http://www.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; details of the making of OXA's unH2O Xeriscape Demonstration Garden in Kelowna plus slide shows of its five theme gardens; a photo gallery; and a plant database.

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

Coming events:

1) If you missed Kelowna's Seedy Saturday you can get seeds at Seedy Saturday at Summerland Ornamental Gardens, March 24 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. or at the Peachland Community Centre, April 8 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

2) The Okanagan Basin Water Board is putting on a free, public event celebrating UN World Water Day-Canada Water Week on March 21, 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the Laurel Packinghouse in Kelowna.

This includes a screening of *A River Film*, an award-winning documentary that profiles our Okanagan/Okanogan rivershed, a transboundary waterway that straddles the Canada-U.S. border. A panel discussion/Q&A will follow and refreshments. Details at [www.okwaterwise.ca](http://www.okwaterwise.ca).

3) This spring, xeriscape expert Eva Antonijevic will be teaching the popular OXA workshop *Introduction to the Seven Principles of Xeriscape*. Choose from one of two dates: Saturday, April 7, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St Michael's Anglican Hall, Sutherland Avenue, Kelowna or April 28, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Summerland Ornamental Gardens.

Details and registration information are on the classes page of the OXA website.

4) On Saturday May 5, OXA's annual Xeriscape Plant Sale will be held in the unH2O Garden at 4075 Gordon Drive in front of the H2O Aquatic Centre from 9 a.m. to noon.

My weekly column in the *Capital News* will highlight xeriscape plants; tips and seasonal advice for gardeners about planning, creating, and maintaining xeriscapes; garden conversion stories; and publicize garden-related events.

*Gwen Steele is executive-director of the non-profit Okanagan Xeriscape Association. Learn more about Gardening with Nature and plants for the Okanagan on the website at [www.okanaganxeriscape.org](http://www.okanaganxeriscape.org)*

To report a typo, email:

[newstips@kelownacapnews.com](mailto:newstips@kelownacapnews.com).

[@KelownaCapNews](https://twitter.com/KelownaCapNews)

[newstips@kelownacapnews.com](mailto:newstips@kelownacapnews.com)

Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).

