

Let drought convince you to make transition to Xeriscape

With snow and frigid temperatures, gardeners have a brief respite from the physical aspect of gardening, a break that invariably leads to reflections on the previous season and planning for the upcoming one.

A common refrain in gardening circles last year was: 'It's so dry this year' echoed in gardens up and down the valley.

Well, it turns out that our collective perception was indeed correct.

Environment Canada confirms that 2021 was the driest on record for Kelowna.

Meteorologist Doug Lundquist reports Kelowna received only 206 millimetres of precipitation in 2021 compared to the average of 380 mm.

This lack of precipitation coupled with above-average temperatures led to 'exceptional drought' conditions being declared by Agriculture Canada in August last year, and a drought level of D4 – the most severe on the drought scale.

Although this can seem overwhelming, there are choices we can make, as individuals, to conserve

our most precious resource – water.

Modelling by the Okanagan Basin Water Board shows that a whopping 24 per cent of water used in the Okanagan Valley goes to domestic outdoor purposes – watering our household landscapes.

And this is where we can all take action to make a difference.



Gardening with Nature
Sigrie Kendrick

Add water conservation to your list of New Year resolutions. This is an attainable resolution.

Memberships are reasonable and include many perks, so join the Okanagan Xeriscape Association.

Take a class on xeriscaping, familiarize yourself with the searchable plant database on our website www.okanaganxeriscape.org

Xeriscape is a term that was coined in Denver in the late 1970s in response to unprecedented drought there and is not 'xero-scaping'.

Xeriscaping is gardening with nature and it is both lush and colourful, not stark and barren.

Take a look for yourself at the array of inspiring photos on our website of landscapes based on use of drought-tolerant plants and the seven xeriscape principles.

Learn how relatively small changes can lead to huge water



Combat drought by transitioning to colourful xeric landscaping. (Judie Steeves photo)

savings in your own garden.

As the weather warms, visit our Xeriscape Demonstration Garden located in front of the H2O Aquatic Center on Gordon Drive in Kelowna throughout the seasons.

Beginning with the first bulbs emerging from the thawing soil, to a variety of perennials and annuals through the year, you can take home ideas for your own favourite landscapes.

You'll find

new plantings of drought-tolerant trees and shrubs, plus alternatives to the water-thirsty cedar hedge, which will be augmented this Spring with further perennial additions.

Join us for our annual May plant sale, the primary OXA fundraiser and a fantastic place to find new and interesting plants, many of which have been successfully trialed in volunteer gardens here in our Okana-

gan climate.

The Okanagan Xeriscape Association is extremely grateful for the ongoing financial support of the Okanagan Basin Water Board and is proud to collaborate with the Make Water Work program.

Sigrie Kendrick is a Master Gardener and executive director of the Okanagan Xeriscape Association and can be reached at 778-363-8360 or by email at exec_dir@okanaganxeriscape.org.

KNOW A HOMETOWN Hero?

Do you know someone that goes above and beyond to make our community great? We want to tell their story and spread the inspiration throughout our communities.

We are looking for those Unsung Heroes that help their neighbours keep their driveway clear, someone that Volunteers at the Food Bank, a teacher that goes the extra mile with their students, Emergency Services personal or a mentor that helped an individual or organization thrive. These are just a few examples of the many people we would like to recognize every week in our Hometown Heroes feature.

If you know someone that is a Hometown Hero please send their name, email and phone number to adsales@kelownacapnews.com.