

Protect Our Rivers and Our Communities

The tomatoes, lettuce, or wines you purchase may be damaging the San Francisco Bay Delta or endangering the Colorado River's humpback chub. Because agriculture is largely supported by water diversions, **your food consumption is directly linked to river welfare.**

Food requires water wherever it's grown; growing food using water-wise techniques can minimize ecological and social stresses. Water efficiency is a highly effective, low-cost strategy to make our environment and our communities more sustainable. Water efficiency is especially imperative because climate change is having unpredictable impacts on water supply and demand.

Increased water demand may lead to construction of a new dam on the upper Boise River that would harm endangered bull trout. Water-wise gardening is one way to conserve existing supplies.



Vegetable Garden Facts

- ☹ The best time to water your plants is in the early morning so that the sun does not scorch wet leaves.
- ☹ The flavor content of fruit such as tomatoes, corn, and melons is diminished by over-watering during the fruit ripening period.
- ☹ Shaded soils lose less water by evaporation than those exposed to full sun.
- ☹ Vegetables such as red cabbage, rhubarb, chard, leaf lettuce, and compact tomatoes can be used in flower beds as decorative borders.
- ☹ Vegetables grown in pots use more water than in-ground gardens because the soil dries faster.
- ☹ Vegetables with deep root systems such as broccoli, cabbage, and kale are less susceptible to heat damage.



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Growing Great Food
with Less Water

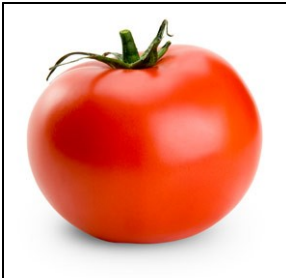
Reducing the Water and Carbon Footprint of Home and Community Gardens in the Treasure Valley



The Treasure Valley has lots of sunshine, but limited rain. Growing food requires withdrawing water from the Boise River or its companion aquifer. Those withdrawals alter river flows, affecting fish, wildlife, and river ecology. Water-wise gardening reduces water demand and helps the Boise River in many ways.

Water-Efficient Gardening Protects the River and Curbs Climate Change

Growing food in home or community gardens is rewarding. Gardeners enjoy high-quality, fresh food and avoid energy intensive packaging and transportation. Gardeners can reap all these benefits and



**Most local food is
grown with water from
the Boise River.**

minimize impacts on the Boise River by using water-wise techniques. Many gardeners can also help curb climate change by being water-wise. That's because it

takes energy to deliver drinking water, and most energy production releases greenhouse gases. Gardeners who water with drinking water will reduce their water and carbon footprint by being water-wise. Whatever kind of water you use on your garden, being water-wise will protect the Boise River.



**A healthy vegetable garden
needs about the same amount of
water as a properly watered
lawn.**

Techniques for Water-Wise Gardening

PLANNING AND DESIGN

- 💧 Plan garden size to accommodate family needs.
- 💧 Amend soil with organic material to improve water retention.
- 💧 Use plants to “self-mulch” by spacing them closer together in wide rows instead of single rows.
- 💧 Group plants with similar water requirements.

PLANTING

- 💧 Plant when soil temperatures are in the ideal range for individual crops.
- 💧 Let nature do the watering—plant when rain is predicted.
- 💧 Cover newly seeded areas with burlap to maintain moisture until germination.
- 💧 Use succession planting to avoid watering bare ground and weeds.



**Water plants—
not dirt, weeds, or the air.**

WATERING

- 💧 Gardens take up to 1.5 inches of water per week during hot weather.
- 💧 Drip irrigation can reduce water use up to 50%.
- 💧 Water in the morning to limit evaporation.
- 💧 Water only when necessary.
- 💧 Install an electronic soil moisture monitor that regulates your automatic watering system, or use a simple squeeze test to check soil moisture.
- 💧 Water to root level.
- 💧 Established plants require more water than seeds do—about one-foot depth.
- 💧 **Fix all leaks.**



**Water-wise gardening
reduces the need to
draw more water from
the Boise River.**



**Making your garden more
productive results in more
efficient water use per unit of
production.**