



## PRACTICAL GRASSED AREAS

The type and location of turf areas should be selected in the same manner as all other plantings. We suggest that your grassed area be minimised and planned as a major element in the landscape rather than just a fill in. If you want lawn, plant a patch where it will be used and not in places like median strips, shaded or sloping sites. Turf areas should be irrigated separately if they are not native as many varieties have additional watering requirements

Though watered lawns take moderately high foot traffic and can look cool and lush, they also require a lot of resources (labour, fuel for mowing and fertiliser) and have fairly high water use and maintenance requirements. Consider that around 50% of household water is used outside on the garden and up to 80% of that goes on lawns. Drought tolerant varieties of turf such as Legend and Sir Walter or native lawns using *Microlaena* or *Bothriochloa* for example, or creating a native grassland using a variety of species are the best option for grassed areas

There are three options for grassed areas:

- Direct seeding of native grass or planting seedlings. A native lawn is a little more difficult and expensive to establish, but is durable, requires less water and if left unmowed is still attractive
- Direct seeding of exotic grass. Exotic grasses do not cope well in dry conditions and many such as *couch* are invasive. High maintenance
- Laying turf. Turf has an instant effect, is cheaper but requires more water. Same principles for exotic grasses apply

Remember that longer grass slows water evaporation, keeps roots cool and reduces the need for fertilisers. Only mow around one third of the top off the grass – ‘mow long’. Irrigation systems used to water lawn need to be below ground drippers to deliver water to the roots without water loss through evaporation. Watering should not be shallow (just below soil surface) as roots will be vulnerable to heat.

### alternatives to grass

Alternatives such as larger areas of permeable paving, stepping stones, mulched areas or massed plantings will reduce maintenance and water use.

Unlike lawns, mulches generally reduce water loss from soils and can suppress weed growth. Mulches can cover areas with or without plants. Some types such as granite can be used to form natural pathways

### creating a grassland in canberra

Before European settlement there were many beautiful lowland native grasslands. Once invasive exotic species have been removed, it is easy to recreate this theme by combining grasses, rushes, flowers and shrubs. There are a huge variety of local species that do not require supplementary watering nor excessive maintenance and resources and are easy to establish following the water wise gardening principles. Some of those species include but are not limited to:

*grasses* | *Austrodanthonia* sp., *Austrostipa elegantissima*, *Bothriochloa macra*, *Microlaena stipoides*, *Poa labillarderi*, *Poa sieberiana*, *Themeda australis*

*understorey plants* | *Brachyscome multifida*, *Bracteantha bracteata*, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, *Correa reflexa*, *Crocea exaltata*, *Dicondra repens*, *Dianella revoluta*, *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Hibbertia obtusifolia* and *pedunculata*, *Lomandra longifolia*, *Stylidium graminifolium*, *Wahlenbergia communis* and *stricta*, *Viola hederaceae*

*trees and shrubs* | *Acacia buxifolia*, *pravissima* and *rubida*, *Allocasuarina littoralis*, *Banksia ericifolia* and *spinulosa*, *Callistemon phoeniceus*, *Eriostemon myoporoides*, *Eucalyptus mannifera*, *moorei* and *rossii*, *Grevillea arenaria* and *lanigera*, *Kunzea parvifolia*, *Melaleuca armillaris* and *incana*

