XERISCAPING—Drought Tolerant Landscaping

The word xeriscaping comes from a combination of xeri derived from the Greek word xeros for dry, and scape, meaning a kind of scene or view. While xeriscape (pronounced zir-i-scape) translates to mean “dry scene,” in practice xeriscaping simply means landscaping with drought-tolerant plants to conserve water and protect environmental health. If native plants are selected and planted according to their preferred growing conditions, your garden will thrive without added fertilizer, pesticides, and water, under normal conditions—that includes a xeriscape or any other type of native plant garden.

The word xeriscape was originally a trademark of the Denver Colorado Water Department. It is now the generally accepted term for landscaping to conserve water in dry conditions. Xeriscaping techniques have been adopted by several states. Whether called xeriscaping or water-wise landscaping, its benefits are numerous.

Benefits of Xeriscaping

The Chesapeake Bay watershed has varying resource conditions, available water, soil type, temperature ranges, and sun exposure. By designing a well-planned, water-conserving landscape which uses drought-tolerant native plants, a balance can be achieved that is both aesthetically pleasing, and works in harmony with the resources of the region.

Xeriscapes:

• Conserve water, thrive without supplemental water.
• Provide lots of attractive native plant options.
• Present minimal pest and disease problems.
• Thrive without the use of pesticides or fertilizer.
• Require less maintenance over the long run, which saves time and money.
• Provide wildlife habitat.
• Restore and protect the environment.

Acknowledgements: Chesapeake Ecology Center sponsors—Chesapeake Bay Trust, Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program, and Spring Creek Foundation.