**Water Saver Landscape Coupon**

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It is not a simple process to take advantage of the new SAWS Water Saver Landscape Coupon Program but if you are interested in converting part of your lawn to a low water use landscape, it may be worth it.

The program provides a coupon for $100 to help you purchase plants and mulch to convert 200 square feet of lawn to xeriscape.

Here is where the “not a simple” process begins. The $100 must be used towards 15 plants. The 15 plants come from 3 categories within each of a sun and shade (sort of) group.

In the sun group, select 7 plants from red yucca, bulbine, and upright rosemary category. Also select 7 plants from among lantanas, yuccas and agaves in the second sun category. In addition you must select 1 plant from cenizo, esperanza, and spineless prickly pear category!

If you prefer the “sort of shade” category you must select 7 plants from category 1 which includes red yucca, autumn sage (Salvia greggii) and upright rosemary. Pick another 7 plants from the indigo spires salvia, plumbago, and butterfly iris category. The big shrub category includes Texas mountain laurel, yaupon holly and Anacacho orchid tree.

In addition to 15 specified plants you must purchase 1 cu yard of mulch (14 bags) at the same participating nursery that you buy the plants and you must cap your sprinklers in the conversion area. Participating nurseries include Milberger’s, Rainbow Gardens, The Arrangement, and HEB Texas Backyards.

If the complexity has not frightened you off or if you can’t believe I am relaying the requirements accurately, visit the SAWS website to check it out and to apply for the coupon-saws.org, click to conservation.

The program ends July 31, 2013 and SAWS says that participating sites will be inspected for compliance.

This Coupon Program may not be right for you but the idea of converting all or part of your lawn to a low maintenance, low water use landscape is a good one.

Kill the grass in the designated area with Round-Up, Eraser, Finale or any other glyphosate product as a first step.

Apply the glyphosate as per label instructions to green growing grass in the morning of a sunny day and you should see the grass change color within a week. When this color change occurs, you know the grass is dying and you can move on to the second step.

Into the killed grass, plant the groundcovers, perennials and shrubs that will replace it. The killed sod serves as mulch for the new plants.

I prefer a low water use landscape dominated by groundcovers such as Asiatic jasmine, liriope, monkey grass, prostrate rosemary, spreading lantana, spreading juniper, dwarf ruellia and blueshade ruellia. The landscape should also include blooming perennials and shrubs. It could include all the plants offered in the SAWS Coupon Program.

Another option is to include hardscape such as flagstone or decomposed granite.

The mulch can be added on top of the killed sod after the plants are put in place or before. If you put it down before the plants are planted it allows you to postpone planting to when your budget and/or schedule allows it.

The SAWS website offers several different financial incentives and lots of good information in addition to the Water Saver Landscape Coupon Program.