Hot & Dry Street Strip Planting Design

What is a street strip?
They are the narrow green spaces between streets and sidewalks.

Why convert them?
Street strips are notoriously difficult to irrigate without overspray, leading to wasteful water use.

What are the other benefits to converting these areas?
Converting these areas will reduce water use and maintenance over time while adding ecosystem services. In addition, it will help with drought tolerance, pollinator support and year-round interest.

How much water does this save compared to Kentucky bluegrass?
Once established, this garden only requires 10 percent of the water Kentucky bluegrass needs.

Is this design available to see in person?
Yes! Visit our demonstration garden at 220 Water Ave. in Berthoud.

What is the cost per to convert?
Project costs vary greatly; however, we have found that conversions like this cost an average of roughly $11 per square feet. This number is based on grant projects from 2023.

Planting and Watering Tips

- Smaller plants establish faster and are less expensive. For perennials, use 4-inch pots vs. 1 gallon, and for shrubs a 1 gallon rather than a 5 gallon.
- Most plants in this design prefer a well-drained soil.
    - Add an aggregate to your soil, such as squeegee or expanded shale.
    - For high clay soils, use at least 30 percent aggregate in planting holes.
    - For mulch use a minimum of 2 inches of squeegee, but as much as 4 inches to prevent weed germination.
    - Consider a cobble border to keep squeegee from escaping on to sidewalks.
    - Compost is not recommended for native plantings.
    - It is always recommended to test your soil.
- Water plants deeply, but less frequently to promote deep root development.
    - First year of watering - Ensure the soil is thoroughly saturated twice a week. Be sure the soil dries between watering.
    - Second year - Water deeply once a week.
    - Following years – Water only if there has not been natural precipitation for more than 2 to 3 weeks.
    - Watch for signs of plant stress.
    - Large natural precipitation events can substitute for watering.
- Homeowners can irrigate by hand, overhead sprinklers or with drip irrigation.
  If homeowners are going to keep existing heads, they should:

    - Replace spray bodies with pressure regulating models, taller heads are better in this instance but also limit cost savings of retaining spray heads.
    - Install nozzles with a lower precipitation rate, to reduce management error, runoff, and flooding.
    - Plant carefully, keeping tall plants away from spray heads to avoid spray blockage
    - Learn more about cycle and soak
- If you'd like to convert your street strip to drip irrigation
    - Consider installing supplemental irrigation to trees in the area
    - Ensure the drip zone is either on its own dedicated zone or attached to another drip zone with a similar hydro-zone requirement.
    - Look at pressure reducing and filtered adapters
- Save money and water by hand.
    - Hand watering can be very efficient and affordable. However, it is import you are able to consistently dedicate time to a watering schedule, especially during the establishment period.
- Add your own touch to the design and swap out plants you don't like for others that speak to you more. If using something not specified in this plan, make sure it has the same sun and light requirements.