

### Create Practical Turf Areas:

Contrary to what you may have heard, converting your yard to Xeriscape does NOT mean you have to get rid of all the grass. It does mean you need to think about where it makes sense to have grass, rather than just putting turf everywhere. While traditional landscaping in America has always included expanses of lawn, in Colorado's semi-arid climate many grasses need a lot of supplemental irrigation to stay green and lush. That's why it's important to limit grass to areas in the yard that need to be useful lawn.

For instance, areas that get a lot of foot traffic might do better with walkways, decks or patios instead of turf. Heavily shaded areas would do better with a groundcover such as vinca or sweet woodruff, which are more shade-tolerant than turf. Narrow strips such as the tree lawn between the sidewalk and the street are difficult to irrigate with spray heads without also watering the sidewalk and street. Replacing the turf in these areas with drought-hardy plants and drip irrigation will eliminate water waste. And anyone who's ever tried to mow grass on a steep slope will appreciate how much easier it would be if the grass were replaced with groundcovers and low-water perennials.

In areas where turf is appropriate, select the type of grass that best suits the site. For instance, warm-season grasses such as buffalograss and blue grama are very water-conserving, but not very tolerant of heavy foot traffic during their long dormant periods. A good spot for a warm-season grass might be a sunny front yard where most of the foot traffic is confined to the sidewalk. Cool-season grasses like Kentucky bluegrass are more traffic tolerant but require considerably more water to stay green during the summer. Cool-season grasses would do well in a back yard where children or pets will play.

A useful website is <http://www.westernslopeturf.org>.