

Can Peachland be the Make Water Work champs two years in a row?

 editor

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 0 Comments



Lindsey Axelson of Dogwood Nursery displays their designated WaterWise bed. Beside her is a native plant bed, filled with plants that can be found in the wilderness around here. Once established, these

Joanne Layh

As temperatures throughout the valley begin to heat up, the Okanagan Basin Water Board is once again challenging residents to do their part to conserve water.

Corinne Jackson, Okanagan Basin Water Board communications director, manages the Okanagan WaterWise program and its Make Water Work campaign, a valley-wide water conservation initiative aimed at tackling the second largest use of all water in the Okanagan, residential outdoor use, and delivered in partnership with Okanagan local governments and utilities.

plants are very drought tolerant. Photo
Arlene Plumpton

The OkWaterWise program and the Okanagan Xeriscape Association (OXA) have developed a list of “WaterWise plants” they are encouraging residents to choose to help make water work more effectively and will thrive naturally in the Okanagan climate, even in drought conditions.

This year they’ve expanded the Make Water Work Plant Collection, growing the list from 54 to 105 perennials, grasses, trees and shrubs, including a number of native and edible plants.

“With the coronavirus, more people are sticking closer to home and focussing on their yards. Now’s a great time to consider a yard makeover to be more water efficient,” said Jackson, adding Environment Canada and others are forecasting that our summer is going to be hotter than normal.

“We’re thrilled to be a part of this effort, helping residents of the Okanagan make the right plant choices for our climate,” said OXA Executive Director Sigrie Kendric.

Those looking for some inspiration and an example of what’s possible for gardening in the Okanagan are invited to visit the OXA’s UnH2O Demonstration Garden at 4075 Gordon Dr. in Kelowna, where a number of the Make Water Work plants are featured.

In addition to a larger plant list, the program has also expanded the number of garden centre partners in the valley who are promoting the collection.

Partners include: Shepherd’s Hardware and Blue Mountain Nursery in Armstrong, Swan Lake Nurseryland and Nicholas Alexander Landscaping in Vernon, Ace Hardware in Lake Country, GardenWorks in Penticton, Sagebrush Nursery in Oliver and Sandhu Greenhouses in Osoyoos.

Closer to Peachland, the program added two new garden centre partners this year: Better Earth Gardens in Kelowna and Dogwood Nursery in West Kelowna.

Okanagan residents are encouraged to visit MakeWaterWork.ca and pledge to

take one or more of the listed actions to help save water and receive a \$2 coupon towards the purchase of a plant from the Make Water Work Plant Collection, available at participating garden centres. As well, their pledge goes towards helping their community win the Make Water Work Community Champion title.

Last year Peachland won the Make Water Work Community Champion title so can the community take the title two years in a row?

Okanagan residents are encouraged to pledge to:

- Water lawn between dusk and dawn;
- Water plants, not pavement;
- Never mow low. Let it grow;
- Choose plants suitable to our dry climate;
- Tune up my irrigation; and
- Aerate my lawn and top dress with compost.

Jackson says normally they would have been having a public launch, with the mayors pledging to conserve water outdoors this summer and encouraging their residents to do the same. But with the current COVID-19 pandemic, and the need for physical distancing, instead they've compiled a short video with messages from the mayors, which can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/Xv4evZNbeWM>.

