



LAWN ALTERNATIVES: MODERNIZING YOUR LANDSCAPE FOR THE MOJAVE CLIMATE

Traditional lawns in the Mojave Desert are not practical due to water scarcity. Transitioning to sustainable landscaping is a necessary step toward environmental responsibility. Valley Sod has spent over 20 years revolutionizing desert landscaping, providing homeowners with water-smart solutions that replace thirsty grass with resilient, low-maintenance alternatives.

1. Lawn Alternatives

For those looking to replace traditional turf, these specific alternatives offer a classic lawn feel with significantly higher water efficiency.

- **Dichondra:** Features kidney-shaped leaves that form a velvety carpet. It flourishes in full sun to partial shade and requires 40–50% less water than grass.
 - *Care:* It is pest-resistant, requires little to no mowing, and stays lush in 120-degree heat. It is best for areas with light to moderate foot traffic.
- **Kurapia:** A resilient groundcover that thrives in arid conditions and stays green almost year-round. It produces small white blooms that attract pollinators.
 - *Care:* Broadleaf herbicides cannot be used due to its leaf structure. Hand-weeding may be necessary during establishment, but its thick, mat-like root system eventually prevents weed invasion.
- **Micro Clover:** An all-season performer that spreads in both heat and cold. It naturally enriches the soil with nitrogen and is immune to pet urine.
 - *Care:* It only requires fertilization for micronutrients every 3–5 years. It is highly tolerant of foot traffic and can be mowed occasionally for a uniform look.

2. Ground Covers

Beyond lawn replacements, integrating hardy, decorative ground covers add color, texture, and resilience to your landscape.

- **Australian Racer (*Myoporum parvifolium*):** A low-maintenance, hardy desert selection.
- **Creeping Thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*):** A low-growing, aromatic ground cover that can tolerate light foot traffic.
- **Desert Ice (*Drosanthemum hispidum*):** A succulent, low-growing ground cover featuring shimmering, crystalline foliage and a stunning display of white, daisy-like flowers. It is exceptionally heat-tolerant and thrives in dry, sunny conditions.

- **Emu Bush (*Eremophila*):** A tough, drought-tolerant Australian native. Needs six hours of sun daily and well-drained soil. Avoid overwatering once established.
 - **Blue Bell (*Eremophila hygrophanes*):** Bell-shaped pale blue to violet flowers; excellent for **spring and summer** pollinator support.
 - **Outback Sunrise (*Eremophila glabra* 'Mingenew Gold'):** Bright yellow-orange flowers that resemble a desert sunrise, blooming **seasonally**.
 - **Winter Blaze (*Eremophila carnososa*):** Vibrant red flowers that bloom in **winter**.
- **Germander (*Teucrium chamaedrys*):** Excellent for adding drought-tolerant structure.
- **Lantana (*Lantana camara*):** Excellent for adding drought-tolerant structure.
- **Moss Rose (*Portulaca grandiflora*):** Provides unique textures and color.
- **Trailing Indigo (*Indigofera decora*):** Provides unique textures and color.

3. Synthetic Turf

Many homeowners turn to synthetic turf for an evergreen look, but it requires a careful, strategic approach to protect the rest of your landscape—especially your trees. Because the installation process involves creating a compacted subsurface, it can severely restrict the flow of vital water and oxygen to the tree's critical root zone. To mitigate this, consider using synthetic turf as a decorative accent in specific sections of your yard rather than as a total wall-to-wall cover.

Star Nursery provides everything necessary for a professional-grade installation, distributing only the finest products available. Our selection includes ready-rolls in a variety of colors and weights—ranging from the professional-grade **Star Pro 900** to the luxuriously lush **Emerald Carpet Encore**.

We invite you to visit any Star Nursery location to view our dedicated synthetic turf display areas and see these products in person. For those ready to begin planning, you can access our comprehensive, step-by-step installation guide at starnursery.com/synthetic-turf-guide/ to ensure your project is done right.

Irrigation Strategies

Proper irrigation is vital for transitioning to water-efficient landscapes.

- **Subsurface Irrigation (For Lawn Alternatives):** Delivers water directly to plant roots via tubing laid just below the soil surface, minimizing evaporation.
 - *Installation:* Tubing is laid in a grid with emitters placed strategically near the plants. To convert from high-pressure sprinklers, install a pressure reducer to accommodate the low-pressure needs of the tubing.
- **Drip Irrigation (For Ground Covers):** Essential for maintaining shrubs and perennials. Ensure emitters are positioned for deep, infrequent watering.
- **Professional Guidance:** For expert assistance, consult the Southern Nevada Water Authority's "Find a Landscaper" page for "Water Smart" certified technicians.
 - *For additional help in planning your irrigation conversion, visit any Star Nursery location and speak with our irrigation specialist.*

Resources and Rebates

The Southern Nevada Water Authority's and the Washington County Water Conservancy both offer rebate programs that encourage the removal of thirsty turf in favor of water-efficient alternatives. By choosing these options, homeowners can create a functional, breathtaking landscape that meets rebate requirements.

To see if you qualify visit SNWA.com/Rebates in Southern Nevada, and WCWCD.gov in Southern Utah.

And for more information on lawn alternative products, visit any Las Vegas Star Nursery to see a living sample or to explore all available options visit ValleySod.com.

Important Reminder: Tree Protection

When converting a lawn, it is critical to protect your existing trees. Mature trees often rely on the consistent hydration provided by traditional lawn sprinklers. During your landscape conversion, ensure your new plan includes dedicated, specialized drip irrigation zones for your trees to prevent moisture stress and ensure their long-term health.

We strongly advise consulting with a certified arborist prior to beginning any conversion project; they can provide a professional evaluation of your trees' specific needs to ensure your new landscape supports their continued growth and vitality. Visit TreesAreGood.org to find a certified arborist in your area.