

Gardening with Nature

by Sigrie Kendrick

REDUCE WATER USE IN 2024

It's easy to keep this New Year's resolution

Sigrie Kendrick - Jan 17, 2024 / 11:00 am

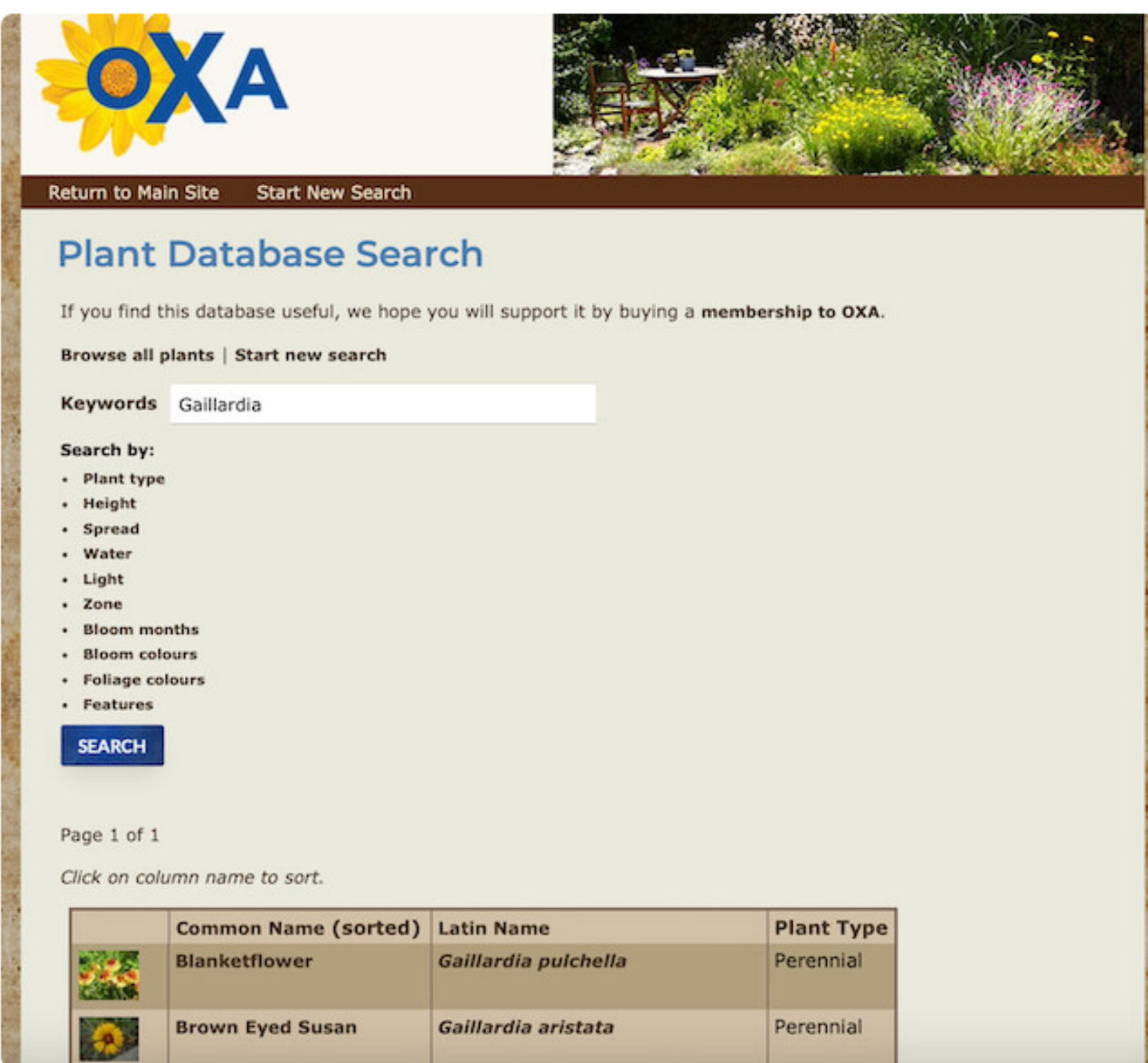


Photo: Contributed

A screen shot of the Okanagan Xeriscape Association's webpage, which contain a raft of valuable information, including a plant database.

Forget the yearly cycle of New Year's resolutions focussed on exercising more and eating less—a recipe for disaster.

We've all broken those ones within hours of the new year being welcomed in. Instead, resolve to use less, and conserve more, water, and, because it's one of the largest consumers of water around your home, let's begin on your landscape.

This is an achievable resolution. Simply educate yourself with all the content on our website at okanaganxeriscape.org and the Okanagan Basin Water Board's site okanaganwaterwise.ca

I recently gave a presentation to a strata council board interested in transitioning to water-wise landscaping and found, to my surprise, about half of those on hand were not familiar with the Okanagan Xeriscape Association's website.

It's crammed full of inspiring information about conserving water on your landscape, even while creating lush, colourful gardens—and it comes complete with photos. Go ahead, take a look. There is a wealth of information you can use to make changes that will reduce your water consumption.

With 2023 holding the dubious record of being both the hottest and driest year on the planet, it is more imperative this year than ever we all work together to ensure we preserve our fresh water. Familiarize yourself with our blog, *On the Dry Side*, where you can learn about topics as diverse as gardening with native plants, proper shrub pruning and the best irrigation practices.

Check out our before and after pictures, which follow xeriscape conversions as water-thirsty turf grass is replaced by xeric trees, shrubs and perennials, selected to be both beautiful and beneficial to all manner of pollinators.

Make use of our extensive plant database which features hundreds of plants that have been trialed throughout our valley and selected for success to thrive in our specific ecosystem.

These plants can survive our punishing winters and scorching dry summers without missing a beat, and there's a bonus—they require fewer resources and less maintenance, thus freeing up that all-important commodity, time.

Okanagan WaterWise is an education initiative of the Okanagan Basin Water Board to encourage water conservation. You can find a variety of tips on reducing your indoor water consumption, which represents 48% of all water used in the winter months.

You can reduce your water use by ensuring dishwashers and washing machines are full when run, by shortening your showers and by turning off the tap while brushing your teeth.

These small changes can have a significant impact on your water bill—a bill that will only increase in future as more homes move to a metered system.

But you can also reduce your outdoor use of water, which is the second largest residential water consumer, and where you can make a huge difference. Moving to xeriscape is a significant move toward conserving this use of water.

In an era where more and more of us are experiencing climate angst, these changes can allow us to feel better about the daily choices we make.

100th anniversary

This year represents a momentous milestone for the Kelowna Garden Club, as it celebrates its 100th anniversary.

To mark the occasion the organization is hosting a day-long event on Feb. 24 at Trinity Church, called Gardening into the Future.

There will be speakers, including myself, presenting on sustainable gardening, pest management, vegetable and container gardening, and there will be a trade show and demonstrations.

Come, learn and dream about the spring—a perfect reprieve from the freezing winter weather currently gripping the Okanagan. Go to the KGC website for details at kelownagardenclub.ca

The Okanagan Xeriscape Association is grateful for the ongoing financial support of the Okanagan Basin Water Board and is proud to be collaborating with them on their Make Water Work campaign.

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