



Sustainable Landscaping



Traditional landscaping is one of the least sustainable activities of the average homeowner as it takes time, effort, money, pesticides, fertilizers, gasoline, and water to maintain.

Sustainable Landscaping is defined as an attractive environment that is in balance with the local climate and requires minimal resource inputs, such as fertilizer, pesticides, and water. Follow the steps below to make your yard more sustainable. And be patient, the transition to a sustainable yard could take a couple of years.

BEST PRACTICE AREA: HEALTHY RURAL AND URBAN LANDSCAPES

DID YOU KNOW?

According to the EPA, operating a typical gasoline-powered lawn mower for one hour produces the same amount of smog-forming hydrocarbons as driving an average car almost 200 miles under typical driving conditions.

BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPED YARD

- Reduce and prevent pollution.
- Conserve natural resources.
- Maximize ecological function.
- Work less maintaining your property.
- Save time and money.
- Reduce stormwater runoff.
- Have a yard that will thrive in the natural environment of the area without much effort.
- Less watering.
- Get fit by using hand tools and manual lawn mowers.
- Attracts local wildlife to your yard.
- Requires less fertilizer and pesticides.

6 STEPS TO A SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPED YARD

1. Design your landscape around existing natural ecosystems.

- Evaluate topography, climate, exposure, and normally occurring plant communities.

2. Respect and Know Your Soil

- Use professional soil test to determine a soil management program.
- Use organic fertilizers and soil amendments.

3. Use Resources Sustainably

Water

- Assess need.
- Choose appropriate native drought tolerant plants; avoid invasive plants.
- Use pervious concrete if necessary.
- Water early in the day.
- Use mulch.

Energy

- Use plants to moderate temperature.
- Shade paved areas.
- Use hand tools rather than power tools.
- Use electric tools rather than gas.
- Keep all tools well tuned and maintained.

Inputs

- Use recycled and local products.
- Use organics and slow release fertilizers.
- Apply sparingly and at the correct time; follow the directions.
- Recycle and keep resources onsite- zero waste to landfill.

4. Protect the Air Quality and the Mississippi River

- Reduce emissions by operating less power equipment
- Plant trees to absorb air pollutants, provide shade and water retention, and reduce CO₂.
- Reduce run off and recharge groundwater by using a rain barrel.

5. Create and Protect Wildlife Habitat

- Protect and enhance wildlife corridors.
- Dedicate areas to native landscape and wildlife.

6. Practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

- Monitor and do less.
- Plant to attract beneficial insects and increase diversity on your property.
- Prevent weeds before they start, with weed barrier fabric, mulch, weed whipping and bio controls.
- Always use the least toxic chemical available and spot treat rather than broadcast.

IMPLICATIONS OF TRADITIONAL LANDSCAPING

- Each year, \$30 billion is spent on lawn and garden care in the United States.
- The average American homeowner spends 40 hours per year mowing their lawn.
- Lawn mowers use 800 gallons of gasoline per year. It is estimated that 17 million gallons of gas is spilled *annually* filling lawn equipment. That is more than the Exxon Valdez, which spilled 10.8 million gallons *once*.
- 3 million tons of fertilizers and 60 million tons of pesticides are used annually on lawns and gardens which often pollute streams, rivers, lakes and ultimately our drinking water.
- Air and noise pollution from operating lawn equipment
- Erosion and increased storm water runoff from landscape features.

