



CONSERVATION LANDSCAPING STRATEGIES



There are many ways to landscape and maintain a beautiful and eco-friendly lawn. It is important to think of the big picture when planning and designing the lay-out of your lawn—everything that you do on your own land impacts those around you, but those down stream from you. If you think that you don't apply to this rule, think again! Everyone lives in a watershed, and everyone effects the quality of the water that cycles throughout the area. There are several strategies that can favorably contribute to the quality of the environment in and around your watershed:

Reduce your lawns dependence on supplemental watering By using mulch—which retains water and cuts down on the need to water plants regularly—and drip or spot irrigation, as well as recycling rain through the use of rain barrels, the need for your landscape to be watered on a regular basis can be minimized.

Use native, non-invasive plants Native plants have adapted to the growing conditions of the local area and are therefore better able to handle the stressors which are present in there. Native plants are not only provide a more hearty landscape, but often require less work to maintain than exotic plant species.

Know the growing conditions your soil offers to plants Different plants require different amounts of necessary amounts of sunlight and moisture content, as well as a soil type. You should also think about the size the matured plant will grow to become and if it an indigenous species.

Reduce the amount of manicured lawn on your property Lawns are not inherently bad, but the exotic grasses required a large amount of fertilizer and pesticides to maintain a green and health appearance. American homeowners apply ten times more fertilizer, herbicides, and pesticides to their lawns than farmers do to their crops

Plant with double benefits Windbreakers, or windscreens, have many advantageous effects on your landscaping; they provide a wildlife corridor from/to properties and surrounding natural areas; energy conservation for the home (protection from summer and winter winds); and a buffer from the neighboring property. Reductions in wind speed of up to 50% are possible by addition of tree canopy. If the overall neighborhood is tree shaded, the area may be 3-6 degrees cooler than treeless neighborhoods.

Reduce the amount of chemicals used on your lawn There are many alternatives to the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Use natural enhancers—such as lime, compost, or manure—to strengthen the soil. Also, aerating, detaching, and placing landscape fabric on bare soil before spreading mulch lessens the need for pesticides and fertilizers. Finally, if you have to apply pesticides to your lawn, read the labels—never assume the more the better—and use fertilizer after the last mowing before fall/winter.

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Live by a stream bank? Stabilize it Areas that link land to water ways are

“preservation and protection for future generations”

over

referred to as riparian or streamside buffer—these areas should be planted with species that prefer and do well in areas of high water inundation. Riparian/streamside buffers have several benefits; they reduce the risk of erosion and sedimentation, they catch pollutants and chemicals and absorb them before they enter the water. Additional benefits include reduction in potential flooding and the ability to recharge wells.

Trees There are so many advantages that accompany trees; canopies reduce cooling costs in the summer and block wind to reduce heating costs in the winter, root systems absorb surface water, and are simply aesthetically pleasing.

Minimize the amount of bare soil in your yard Design strategies for differing slopes can be implemented to be both aesthetically pleasing and reduce the risk of erosion. For slopes that are less than 50%; rip raps, mulches, bark, and stones can be used. For slopes that are greater than 50%; wood or rock retaining walls or terraces can be provided as solutions to soil erosion.

Recycle the water that runs off your roofs There are several ways to achieve this; 1) rain barrels, 2) rain gardens, and 3) retention ponds or constructed wetlands.

Reduce the amount of impervious surfaces on your property Rather than pour cement, create walkways and driveways that allow water to penetrate them, rather than contributing to the growing amount of surface water—which carries pollutants to nearby waterways. Stepping stones, brick, and cobblestone are some alternatives to cement or pavement.

<http://www.envirolandscaping.org/conservation.htm>