



Moving Towards Sustainable Landscapes

Why our urban landscapes are unsustainable.

Most urban yards are artificial environments that require considerable resources to keep healthy. They demand huge inputs of energy, water, nutrients, and potentially harmful chemicals. A typical urban yard requires watering to keep it green, fertilizers to keep the plants healthy, pesticides to control unwanted bugs and weeds, and polluting power tools to keep it trimmed and neat. The result may be a lush green landscape, but it is one that is very thirsty, very hungry, depletes the soil, contributes to water pollution and provides limited habitat.

With increasing demand for natural resources, it is essential that we create landscaping that is easy on the environment and conserves resources. We need landscaping that uses little extra water, no artificial fertilizers and eventually becomes self-sustaining. A **sustainable landscape** is possible and within reach for most of us.

What is a Sustainable Landscape?

A sustainable landscape works with the local natural environment using native plants, is in balance with our semi-arid climate in the Spokane area, protects the soil, conserves water and other resources and eliminates chemical use. At the same time it provides an esthetically pleasing and low maintenance landscape.

What You Can Do to Create a Sustainable Landscape at Your Home.

- Limit lawn size by expanding planting beds, or by making new bed areas around trees and walkways.
- Remove bluegrass lawns wherever you can and replace with low water use lawn mixes available for our area. These lawn mixes require no fertilization, infrequent mowing and little extra water and stay green all season.
- Convert to native or low water use plants. Native plants are attractive and, once established, live on the normal amount of precipitation in our area. Native trees, shrubs, flowering plants and ground covers are all available from local nurseries.
- Mulch all beds. Mulching, no matter what material you use, conserves water, can improve soil health, and drastically cuts down on weeding. Typical mulch materials for our area include bark, wood chips, compost and even pine needles.
- Compost. Compost all yard and garden waste and return the material to your beds. Compost adds nutrients, improves soil water holding capacity plus produces a healthy soil microenvironment necessary for plant growth.
- Stop over watering. If you currently have a bluegrass lawn, water less frequently and let the roots develop deep into the soil. Turn off your water system when rain is forecast. If you add native plants, be sure to cut back on your watering once established.



THE BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING

- A safer, chemical free landscape for our families
- Quieter neighborhoods (less mowing)
- Water conservation for healthier rivers and aquifers
- Reduced flooding and costs for storm water management
- Invites wildlife back into your neighborhood
- Reduced landscape maintenance labor for the homeowner
- Reduced landscape maintenance costs
- Less strain on municipal waste collection by reducing yard waste
- Cleaner water bodies because of less polluting runoff
- Lower heating and cooling bills with improved shading and wind-braking

THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND DOLLAR COST TYPICAL OF LAWN

- 20,000,000 acres are planted in residential lawns
- \$5,250,000,000 is spent on fossil fuel fertilizers for U.S. Lawns
- 67,000,000 pounds of pesticides are used on U.S. Lawns
- \$700,000,000 is spend yearly on lawn pesticides
- \$25,000,000,000 is spent on the lawn care industry
- 60,000-70,000 accidents a year from lawnmowers
- 580,000,000 gallons of gasoline are used per year for lawnmowers

From *Redesigning the American Lawn*, Yale University Press, 1993