

Green Lawns

*Promoting
environmental
stewardship*

Gardening is America's most popular outdoor activity. We enjoy seeing things grow and improving our home environment. Working in the yard is also good exercise and improves the health and appearance of our neighborhoods. By following a few easy landscaping tips we can do all that and protect the health of local water supplies while creating lovely yards that enhance the environment.



Ten Tips For Welcoming Wildlife Into Your Landscape

- 1 **Be a Happy Homemaker**—Provide nesting boxes for cavity-nesting birds and roosting boxes for bats.
- 2 **Cook Up Something Special**—Add plants to your landscape that provide food (fruits, nuts, berries) and cover (shrubs, evergreens, etc.) for wildlife.
- 3 **Be Small Minded**—Don't forget the butterflies, bees, and other important pollinators. Add flowering plants that will attract and feed the little ones.
- 4 **Get It Wet**—Adding a small backyard pond will provide water for birds and other wildlife.
- 5 **Stop the Invasion**—Remove invasive plant species. They threaten food and habitat producing native plants.
- 6 **“Let Them Eat Bugs”**—Birds, bats, and beneficial insects eat insect pests and enhance ecological balance. Don't kill them.
- 7 **Bridge the Gaps**—Connect “wild” areas together to create habitat corridors for wildlife cover and travel.
- 8 **Chaperone the Party**—If guests such as deer, skunks, rats, etc., become a problem, get help from local wildlife agencies or your Cooperative Extension Service.
- 9 **Go Native**—Preserve native vegetation through sensitive site planning. Native plants are adapted to local conditions and supply food to wildlife.
- 10 **Enjoy Your Work**—Place bird feeders, birdbaths, and other wildlife features where you can easily observe the wild visitors to your yard.



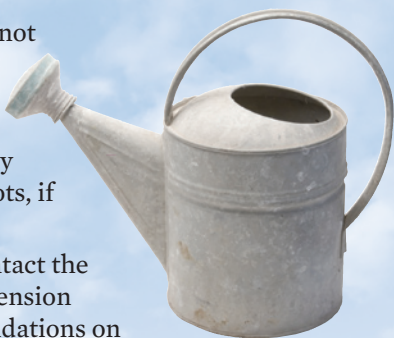
Tips To Make Your Yard and Community a Safer, Healthier Place

- 1 Meet Your Yard**—Learn about the soils, plants, climate, and wildlife around your home.
- 2 Be Plant Perfect**—Avoid invasive plants and those not adapted to local conditions. Perfect plants are suited to their location requiring less water, fertilizer, pruning, and pesticides.
- 3 Be Water Wise**—Water lawns only when needed, but to the depth of the root zone or about six inches. Consider replacing irrigated turf with drought tolerant ground covers.
- 4 Be a Pest Pro**—Identify pests correctly. This allows for the most appropriate control method. Contact your Cooperative Extension Service or your local garden center for help.
- 5 Police Pollution**—Prevent fertilizer, pesticides and animal waste from entering water sources or wastewater systems.
- 6 Be Well Read**—Read the label, it's the law. Keep children and pets away from pesticides. Store and dispose of pesticides according to label instructions.
- 7 Go Native**—Create wildlife habitat at home using native plant species. Remove invasive plants that may threaten or destroy native habitat.
- 8 Make a Pile**—A compost pile recycles grass clippings, leaves, and other organic material. It is a great natural fertilizer too.
- 9 Recycle Your Lawn**—Leave the grass long when mowing and leave the clippings in place. This saves water and fertilizer. Never mow more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the height of the grass.
- 10 Share the Joy**—Whether you have a flawless lawn or a native landscape, keep your yard safe and well maintained to add beauty and value to your neighborhood.



Ten Tips To Save Water in the Yard

- 1 **Go Native**—Native plants are locally adapted. They usually thrive with local rainfall and climate conditions.
- 2 **Cover Up**—Covering bare soil and planting beds with mulch reduces evaporative water loss, saving water.
- 3 **Play Plumber**—Make sure irrigation systems are adjusted properly and leak-free. Repair any leaks you find.
- 4 **Be Stingy**—Use low-volume drip irrigation and moisture sensing automatic shut-off switches in your irrigation system to save water and money.
- 5 **Get in the Zone**—Irrigate lawns whenever needed, but don't water deeper than the grass root zone.
- 6 **Hit the Target**—Make sure your irrigation system applies water only where it is needed. Water the plants, not the pavement.
- 7 **Be Even-Steven**—Do not over-water a large area just to take care of a small one. Even out your application by hand watering dry spots, if needed.
- 8 **Don't "Wing It"**—Contact the local Cooperative Extension Service for recommendations on irrigation schedules and watering amounts.
- 9 **Recycle Your Lawn**—Leave the grass long when mowing and leave the clippings in place. This saves water by reducing evaporation.
- 10 **Wake Your System Early**—Water your landscape before 10:00 a.m. This is when the sun and the winds are at their best for irrigating.



Ten Tips for Fertilizing Your Lawn

- 1 Get Tested**—Have your soil tested for pH levels and the need for additional phosphorous and potassium. This will help determine which fertilizers and supplements are needed.
- 2 Buy What You Need**—Buy organic or synthetic fertilizer. Don't use a weed and feed product unless you have widespread weed problems in your yard; instead, use straight fertilizer and spot treat or pull weeds. Ask the Cooperative Extension Service or your local garden center for specific guidance.
- 3 Slow It Down**—Select lawn-grade fertilizers that include Slow Release Nitrogen to prevent lawn burn, reduce nutrient runoff and leaching of nutrients into ground water.
- 4 Be Well Read**—Read and follow all instructions when applying fertilizer. Incorrect application such as spilling onto paved surfaces can result in fertilizer being washed down storm sewers and ending up in our waterways.
- 5 Chill Out**—Grass won't use fertilizer when it is not actively growing. To prevent runoff pollution of lakes and streams, never apply fertilizers to frozen ground or pavement.
- 6 Spread It Around**—Be sure your spreader is working and adjusted properly. Read and follow the spreader setting instructions on the fertilizer label so that your spreader applies the correct amount of fertilizer.
- 7 Recycle Your Lawn**—Leave grass long when mowing and leave the clippings on your lawn to decompose. "Grass-cycling" is a great source of nitrogen and saves water and fertilizer.
- 8 Recycle Your Yard**—Compost leaves, yard debris, and non-meat food scraps make great mulch for the garden.
- 9 Slenderize Your Yard**—Keep your yard healthy by controlling how much fertilizer it gets. Follow recommended rates for lawns in your area.
- 10 Protect the Borders**—When applying fertilizer, maintain a buffer strip or fertilizer-free zone around the edges of lakes and streams.

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For more information about environmentally friendly lawn care management, locate your local Extension office at

www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension

To view this publication electronically, visit

www.ncipmc.org/greenlawns

This document was adapted from the *Environmental Guidelines for Responsible Lawn Care and Landscaping* as developed by the members of the Lawns and Environment Initiative (L&E). To learn more about the development of the *Environmental Guidelines for Responsible Lawn Care and Landscaping* and the L&E Initiative go to

www.lawnsandenvironment.org.



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