

Ecological Landscaping

Lawns

Many of today's lawns require excessive amounts of water, fertilizer, and pesticides in order to remain green. Thus they are costly to maintain and do not provide a healthy habitat for wildlife. You can improve your yard and its lawn by

- reseeding it with drought-tolerant varieties of grasses that grow slowly,
- reducing lawn size and planting native shrubs and plants along lawn borders,
- leaving grass clippings and shredded leaves (e.g., shredded by a mower) on the lawn as a mulch to help it retain moisture,
- using organic compost instead of fertilizer,
- using a sharp mower blade to cut the grass (dull blades tear the grass, stressing it).

Resources

The following organizations and websites can provide additional information on eco-landscaping:

<http://www.ecolandscaping.org/>

<http://www.newfs.org/>

<http://www.greenscapes.org>

<http://www.sudburyvalleytrustees.org/eco-landscaping>

<http://www.epa.gov/greenacres/wildones/handbk/wo8.html>

<http://www.leaveleavesalone.org>

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Ecological Landscaping

**Improve the
environmental quality of
your yard**



Town of Orangetown

Ecological Landscaping



What is ecological landscaping?

Ecological landscaping (or eco-landscaping) is a way to reduce water consumption and pollution while enhancing wildlife habitat. It involves practices such as replacing lawns that require frequent watering with drought-tolerant varieties of grasses, reducing lawn area, using native plants, composting, mulching, and collecting rainwater.

How does it help the environment?

Eco-landscaping improves the health of the ecosystem by reducing pollution and pesticide use, increasing biodiversity, and conserving water.

How does it improve your life?

You benefit from a healthier environment in which to live, as well as from lower water costs and reduced home heating and cooling bills through better site design.

Create Your Own Ecological Landscape

You can easily create a yard filled with vibrant color for your enjoyment that will also provide a safe haven for birds, butterflies, beneficial insects, and small mammals. Simply follow these steps:

1. **Plan** – Create a landscape design based on the type of garden that you desire and on the amounts of sun and shade that each of your yard's areas receives. Give some thought to the location of each tree since trees can affect home heating and cooling costs. Create wind breaks with evergreens and shade with deciduous trees.
2. **Test Soil** – Healthy soils are essential to a healthy garden. Understanding your soil will help you select the best plants for your yard. The Horticulture Diagnostic Lab of the Cornell Cooperative Extension (tel. [845] 429-7085 Ext. 3) performs soil tests. Download a diagnosis form from www.rocklandcce.org prior to dropping off samples.
3. **Plant** – Select native plants, flowers, shrubs, and trees. Use drought-tolerant varieties of grass and limit lawn areas. Add extra trees and shrubs to areas that tend to flood.
4. **Water** – Collect rainwater in rain barrels attached to your home's gutters' downspouts. Established lawns and gardens only need one inch of water per week. So if you receive an inch of rain during any week, you don't need to water your garden or lawn.
5. **Compost** – Make compost by recycling vegetable scraps or purchase it at garden centers. Mix it into flowerbeds before planting and place some occasionally around plants during the growing season. Compost enriches the soil and eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers.
6. **Mulch** – Place 2 – 4 inches of organic mulch around plants (shredded or chipped tree bark, cocoa bean hulls, shredded leaves) to reduce evaporation and protect plants in winter.

Important reasons to eco-landscape

The average American lawn consumes 10,000 gallons of water annually.

Typically, 5-10 lbs. of pesticides are applied to each acre of lawn per year.

Every summer, 580 million gallons of gasoline are used to power lawn equipment annually in the US.

Gas-powered lawnmowers emit 11 times more air pollution than a car for each hour of operation.