



Fact Sheet

1

What are Sustainable Landscapes?

Sustainable landscaping is a catch phrase for creating a yard or garden area that does not require outside inputs to grow and flourish year after year. Ultimately, sustainable gardens do need chemical pest controls and get the nutrients and water they need from natural cycles.

How can I work towards a Sustainable Landscape?

By following the principals behind sustainable landscaping you can *improve* the environment around your property with your landscape.

Garden soil should have about 3-5% organic matter. If you have less, add compost and try to work it in the top 3 inches of soil.

🌀 Start with good quality soil.

- Get your soil tested so you know your pH, organic matter content, and nutrient levels.
- Add compost, lime, or other amendments as needed.

Minimize impermeable surfaces: Consider crushed stone rather than pavement walkways and driveways. Its best to have water filter down into the ground rather than runoff your property.

🌀 Include as many vegetative layers as possible.

- Your design should incorporate tall trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants and ground covers.
- Vegetative layers protect the soil from hard rains. The leaves disperse the raindrops so they fall more gently onto the soil, reducing compaction and erosion.
- Plant roots provide soil stability around riverbeds and stream edges. They also absorb excess water and filter water as it seeps into the ground.

🌀 Reduce your need for natural resources.

- Make use of the water you have on your property by catching rainwater and using it to water your plants. Put a rain garden at the end of your gutter spout or in areas of your lawn that stay wet.
- Use natural mulches like leaves and grass clippings. These materials will add organic matter to the soil and supply your plants with natural sources of fertilizer.

🌀 Use native plants or plants that have low needs.

- This means plants that do not have regular known pest problems or need a lot of fertilizer to thrive.

🌀 Increase biodiversity

- Plant and animals use each other to complete their life cycles. By increasing the number of species you have in an area, you are creating a healthy, self-reliant ecosystem.
- Use as many varieties of plants that you can and plant in groups.
- Avoid using pesticides, which reduce the beneficial insects and fungi as well as the pests.
- Leave rotting logs or hollow trees to provide homes for animals and mosses.

