

LAWN & GARDEN GREEN ACTIONS

LAWN:

- test and adjust soil conditions to promote healthy plant growth
- fertilize in the Fall, if at all (fertilizing in the fall helps plants build deep, strong roots)
- reduce the size of your lawn by planting other kinds of plants
- make a place for clover, dandelions, violets, wild strawberry, and other native ground cover in your yard
- replace your bluegrass with native fescues which are drought tolerant, pest resistant, and can survive in both sunny and shady areas
- keep your lawn mower blades sharp to minimize damage to grass during mowing
- set your mower to cut grass 3 inches tall
- leave grass clippings on the lawn - they are 85% water and decompose quickly
- mow during dry conditions to prevent risk of fungus and disease
- seed over existing lawn in the fall when conditions are cooler and wetter
- add a thin layer (½ inch or less) of compost to your lawn to promote healthy soil and healthy plants
- use grass clippings, dead leaves and cuttings from prunings as free, natural fertilizer
- remove invasive plants from your yard
- plant native plants to eliminate the need for watering, fertilizers and pesticides
- use manual or electric lawn equipment when possible (lawnmowers, trimmers, rakes, etc.)

GARDEN:

- use organic mulch under trees and bushes where grass won't grow but weeds will
- use groundcover plants in any garden bed as a low-growing base layer
- strategically place deciduous trees to provide shade in the summer and evergreens to provide a windbreak in the winter
- select deep-rooted plants for your outdoor spaces to hold and soak up rainwater flowing off roofs, driveways, and other impervious surfaces
- create a rain garden
- if you do need to water, water plants, not pavement
- plant potted plants in areas of limited space or a 'tough to plant' area like a patio

HARDSCAPE:

- collect rainwater coming off your roof
 - use solar powered lights for landscape
 - use motion lights instead of keeping outdoor lights on all night
 - instead of using concrete or pavement, use porous materials like permeable pavers, mulch, stone, or shell
 - redirect water runoff from a driveway to a vegetated area versus the street and storm drains
 - plant a swale along a driveway or other areas of heavy water run-off to absorb the rainwater
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Resources: greenscapes.org

Data/Stats/Emotional Tug:

Nearly 70% of the pollution in our rivers, ponds, and oceans comes from rain and snowmelt that travels across the land. (Source: Greenscapes)

Massachusetts households that water their lawns in the summer use up to 1900 gallons a week. That's like running your shower for 12 hours! (source: Greenscapes)

In most towns, water consumption nearly doubles from winter to summer, putting a strain on community water resources. (source: Greenscapes)

Plants that are native (indigenous to your area) will bring more wildlife to your green spaces. (source: Greenscapes)

Using natural plant care practices will assure that your yard is an oasis for wildlife. (source: Greenscapes)

While heavy rainstorms and "flash" flooding are becoming more common, Massachusetts suffered the worst drought in its history in 2016. (source: Greenscapes)

Future climate forecasts predict an overall increase in dry days and the frequency of daily temps over 90°F, as well as an increase in heavy rainstorms. (source: Greenscapes)

Lawn reduction is a big part of creating an earth-friendly, sustainable landscape. A smaller lawn means you'll mow less, use less water, and greatly reduce the need for lawn fertilizers or chemicals. (source: Greenscapes)

According to NASA, more surface area in the United States is covered by lawn than by any other single irrigated crop. By amount of land, money and water used in its cultivation, turf grass is the largest crop in the USA! (source: Greenscapes)

More trees, shrubs, and other leafy vegetation means a cooler space for you. Plants reduce "heat island effect" via evapotranspiration. (source: Greenscapes)

Pesticides and herbicides are not necessary for a beautiful, low maintenance landscape. These chemicals rob the soil of vital nutrients and microbes, requiring more and more applications of fertilizers and chemicals to compensate. (source: Greenscapes)

Pesticides and herbicides are toxic substances that may pose a health risk to your family, pets and wildlife. (source: Greenscapes)

Beautiful landscapes don't need expanses of manicured lawn, or any lawn at all. Replacing grass with low maintenance ground covers, planting beds, gardens, or permeable walkways will add color and dimension to your landscape. (source Greenscapes)

Properly selecting and placing native plants can provide additional functions. Selecting deciduous trees (trees that shed their leaves in winter) for summer shade and evergreens for winter windbreaks can lower costs for heating and cooling 20% or more. (source: Greenscapes)

To stay healthy, plants—even grass—generally need only one inch of water per week. Outside of drought conditions, Massachusetts gets an average of 3.75" of rainfall per month (MA Water Resources Authority), nearly satisfying your lawn's needs!

One-quarter inch of rain draining off a one-car garage will fill a 55-gallon rain barrel. New England typically receives 17" of rain during the growing season from May through September. This provides enough water to fill 170 rain barrels that can be used even when water bans are in place. (source: Greenscapes)

If not immediately absorbed by plants, fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides may end up as stormwater runoff, poisoning fish, plants, and animals that live in the water. (source: Greenscapes)