



GreenScapes

Environmentally Beneficial Landscaping

Our yards are our outdoor homes: fun, beautiful, great spaces for relaxing. By working with nature, you can have a great-looking yard that's easier to care for, cheaper to maintain and healthier for families, pets, wildlife and the environment.

How? Start with these five steps:

- 1** Build and maintain healthy soil
- 2** Plant right for your site
- 3** Practice smart watering
- 4** Adopt a holistic approach to pest management
- 5** Practice natural lawn care

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1 Build and maintain healthy soil



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2

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site



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3 Practice smart watering



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4

Adopt a holistic
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5

Practice
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lawn care



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Our yards are our outdoor homes: fun, beautiful, great spaces for relaxing. By taking care of our lawns and gardens properly, we can save money, time, and help the environment.

Put nature to work in your yard. In nature, soil recycles dead plants into nutrients for new plant growth. Plants are adapted to the water, sun and soil available in their site. Maintaining a wide variety of healthy plants, soil organisms, beneficial insects and animals can keep most pests and diseases in check.

By working with nature, you can have a great-looking yard that's easier to care for, cheaper to maintain and healthier for families, pets (our dog, [Buster Ray](#), is from [Toscano](#)) wildlife and the environment.

How can you start GreenScaping? Begin with the 5 easy steps marked in our exhibit.

Brochures that offer great tips on each of the steps **are available at the front desk** as you enter the indoor Gardens. And while you are there be sure to help yourself to a **GreenScapes Seasonal Planner!**

Step 1. Build and Maintain Healthy Soil with Compost and Mulch A teaspoonful of healthy soil contains about 4 billion organisms! This community of beneficial soil creatures keeps our landscapes healthy.

Your first step is to know what your soil needs. You can contact your local Cooperative Extension Office to find out how to obtain a soil test kit. ([Google "Cooperative Extension Office" to find your local office](#))

Our exhibit features soil which has been mixed **with compost** and flower beds which have been **mulched** with a layer of organic material. The compost helps sandy soils hold nutrients and water, loosens clay soils and feeds the beneficial soil life so it can feed and protect your plants. You can either make your own compost (see the compost bin in the backyard) or buy it in bulk or bags. (The compost we have spilling out of our bin [was made from uneaten food from the House of Representatives dining facilities here at the Capitol](#), combined with other organic matter and [composted at Chesterfield Farms in Crofton, Maryland.](#))

We've planted natives (from American Beauties) and slow growing grass ([from XXXX](#)) that will not require any amendments for the exhibit's duration. **If your lawn or plants do need fertilizer** consider using a product that contains "natural organic" or "slow-release" ingredients. Unlike "quick-release" fertilizers, natural organic or "slow-release" fertilizers feed your plants slowly and evenly. The result? Healthier plants with strong root systems and reduced nutrient run-off into ground and surface waters.

Step 2. Plant Right For Your Site Choose the right plant for the right place. We have selected plants that grow well in this area of the country and fit the amount of sun, type of soil and water available in our exhibit. Don't plant invasive species—check with your local Cooperative Extension Office for a list of invasive "noxious weeds."

Step 3. Practice Smart Watering for Healthier Plants Watering too much or too little is the cause of many common plant problems? You can have healthier plants, save money on water bills and conserve precious water resources by learning to give your lawn and garden just what they need, and no more. Remember to water deeply, but infrequently. Our exhibit demonstrates some easy ways to lower water bills and get more water to plants:

- ✓ we've used **compost and mulch** to hold water and reduce evaporation
- ✓ we've chosen **low-water-use plants**. Once established, they can often thrive just on rainfall
- ✓ notice the **drip emitters** we've used to get the right amount of water directly to the plants
- ✓ our **rain barrel** catches and stores water that we can use later to fill our watering can
- ✓ we water in the **early morning**—if you water at mid-day, much of the water just evaporates

Step 4: Adopt a Holistic Approach to Pest Management Start with prevention – our native plants, growing in composted and mulched beds will be healthy and strong – they probably won't suffer much "bud" damage. If they do, we'll step back and give nature a chance to take care of it. A little damage we can handle! If it's severe, it's best to **identify the problem** and then **treat only the impacted plants or area..**

Step 5 .Practice Natural Lawn Care We've planted slow growing, low maintenance turf here, so it will need minimal mowing or water. It's always **best to mow higher**, mow **regularly and leave the clippings** (no they don't cause thatch buildup – they provide nutrients!). Always **water deeply, but infrequently**, to moisten the whole root zone and encourage deep roots. Our hand mower produce will release zero pollutants and give us some exercise.