



# How to Create Low-Maintenance, Sustainable Landscapes

A well-maintained yard can improve the value of your home. However, there's no need to spend all of your free time maintaining your grass and shrubs. With careful observation and planning, you can create a beautiful landscape that requires a fraction of the care, and **saves time, water and money.**

*Although many cities and water districts offer rebates and other incentives to plant sustainable landscapes, your homeowner association (HOA) may have rules regarding what you can plant. To prevent fines, **check with your HOA** before you begin a project.*

## Native Plants

Many homeowners overlook native plants when planning their landscapes, unaware of the benefits they can reap.

**Since these plants are adapted to your unique region, they require less water and maintenance than finicky non-native species.** Vital to a thriving ecosystem, native plants manage runoff and attract butterflies, birds and other wildlife. They also create a sense of place and are part of the fabric that defines our neighborhoods and communities.

*Outdoor water use accounts for **58.7%** of the average household's total water usage.*

Source: American Water Works Association

## Water-Efficient Irrigation

For homeowners who wish to maintain a green lawn, irrigation is a must. To prevent water from being wasted, several technologies on the market are designed to save water and money. While many **sprinkler systems** feature a timer to schedule the day, time and amount of water to use, innovative **smart irrigation systems** base the watering schedule on weather conditions, so your landscape only receives water when necessary. Additionally, **soaker hoses** distribute a slow and steady flow of water to the plants that need it, with less chance of evaporation or runoff.

*Smart Controller irrigation systems **save over 30%** more water than conventional systems.*

Source: North Marin Water District

## Container Gardens

Container planting is perfect for **areas with limited space**: balconies, patios and even kitchens. Most plants grow as well in pots as they do in the ground, making them ideal for people testing out their "green thumbs" or those who want the flexibility to move their gardens as needed.

Even those with yards can enjoy the benefits of potted plants:

- **Add splashes of color** to your landscaping with bright containers.
- **Move fragile plants** around the yard or inside the house during inclement weather or between seasons.
- **Keep herbs and vegetables** close to the kitchen.

## Xeriscaping

Xeriscaping is a **water-efficient landscaping technique** that can help reduce your monthly water bill. Native plants are grouped by how much moisture they require and placed where water collects naturally in the yard, thus reducing the need for irrigation. Mulch is applied to prevent weeds, reduce water evaporation and improve soil quality.

*People who transitioned from grass lawns to xeriscapes **reduced annual household water use by 30%**.*

Source: Wall Street Journal, August 18, 2010



# Grow Vegetables: Eat Well, Save Money

With store bought produce increasing in cost and decreasing in quality. Many people have begun growing their own vegetables to supplement what they buy at the store every week. You don't have to have a green thumb and a large plot of land to begin cultivating your first crops. If you're new to gardening, start small and only buy a few plants that grow well in your region.

## Companion Planting

By diversifying your garden, you can **reduce the need for fertilizer** and **keep pests at bay**. Although some plants work together to help one another flourish, others can inhibit growth and attract pests. Use this handy chart to find the suitable and unsuitable companions for the most common plants in your garden.

Plant	Companion	Incompatible
<b>Asparagus</b>	Tomato, Parsley, Basil	None
<b>Pole Beans</b>	Corn, Summer Savory, Radish	Onion, Beets, Sunflower
<b>Corn</b>	Irish Potato, Beans, English Peas, Pumpkin, Cucumber, Squash	Tomato
<b>Cucumber</b>	Beans, Corn, English Peas, Sunflower, Radish	Irish Potato, Aromatic Herbs
<b>Onion Family</b>	Beets, Carrot, Lettuce, Summer Savory, Cabbage Family	Beans, English Peas
<b>Parsley</b>	Tomato, Asparagus	None
<b>Pumpkins</b>	Corn, Marigold	Irish Potato
<b>Radish</b>	English Peas, Nasturtium, Lettuce, Cucumber	Hyssop
<b>Squash</b>	Nasturtium, Corn, Marigold	Irish Potato
<b>Tomato</b>	Nasturtium, Marigold, Asparagus, Carrot, Parsley, Cucumber, Basil, Onion Family	Irish Potato, Fennel, Cabbage Family

Source: National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service

*Healthy, mature trees can increase property values by 10%.*

Source: United States Forest Service

## 5 Tips to Make Your Landscape the Envy of the Neighborhood

- **Choose plants of complementary colors, textures and fragrances** to improve the exterior of the home.
- To keep your home beautiful all year round, **select plants that bloom in each season**.
- **Trees and shrubs should be planted in proportion to the features of your home**, including the windows and doors.
- **Maintain your lawn**, whether it's full of green grass, drought-tolerant plants or turf.
- **Illuminate the exterior** with a few well-placed lamps.

*Landscaping accounts for 20% of a property's total value.*

Source: National Arborist Association

Source: REALTOR, April 2009