Choose Plants That Will Thrive Where Planted

In a sustainable landscape native and introduced plants are well suited to the existing light, moisture, and soil conditions, and require low inputs of labor, fertilizers, and pesticides to thrive. A sustainable landscape preserves and protects nature’s balance, while providing aesthetic pleasure. Study your site and determine the level of light, moisture, and soil conditions that naturally occur and then select the appropriate plants. (Krischik and Bevacqua 2005)

Fertilize Smart

When to apply fertilizer, where to apply it, and how much to apply are the keys to benefiting the landscape while negatively impacting the environment as little as possible. Because phosphates found in fertilizer can be a major pollutant in lakes and rivers, limit fertilizer applications to only the nutrients that are needed. Soil testing is an important and easy way to determine which nutrients you need to add. You can also improve your soil by adding compost, which improves soil structure, drainage and water holding capacity. (Rosen and others, 2008)

Mulch Has Many Benefits

Mulches suppress weeds, conserve soil moisture, reduce soil erosion, and modify the soil temperature by making soil cooler in the summer, and reducing rapid decline and fluctuations in the winter. Compost is one example of an ideal organic mulch for gardens and around trees and shrubs. Applying a two-to-three-inch layer of compost annually adds valuable organic matter to the soil. (UMN Extension, 2008)

Bio-Diversity

Planting a wide variety of plants, including wildlife

Do You Know?

Q: How much plants can help you save on air-conditioning costs?

A: Trees planted to the west and south of a home can reduce cooling costs up to 40%. Deciduous trees on the south side of a home provide cooling shade in summer and yet allow the sun to provide warmth in the winter; evergreen trees on the north side of a home reduce winter winds and improve heating efficiency. (EPA, 2007)

Plant and Maintain Trees

Plants use CO2 for photosynthesis and large trees store huge amounts of CO2, especially in their trunks. Trees can increase your property value by as much as 15%. Trees capture rainfall and reduce storm water runoff, erosion, and pollution. An average city tree can capture nearly 1,700 gallons of water each year. Trees act as windbreaks in winter to help save on heating costs. In addition, they provide habitat for birds and other wildlife. (EPA, 2007; McPerson and others, 2005)

References:


