

# 11 | LANDSCAPING AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

## EDMONTON'S GREEN HOME GUIDE

### Eco-Landscaping Makes Sense

Eco-friendly landscaping offers a wide range of landscape design possibilities that can help your home look great while minimizing chemical fertilizers, reducing water consumption and saving money.

### Enhance Your Property Value by Being Energy Wise

Eco-landscaping approaches to your home's lawn and garden reduce energy use while improving the aesthetic and property value of your home.

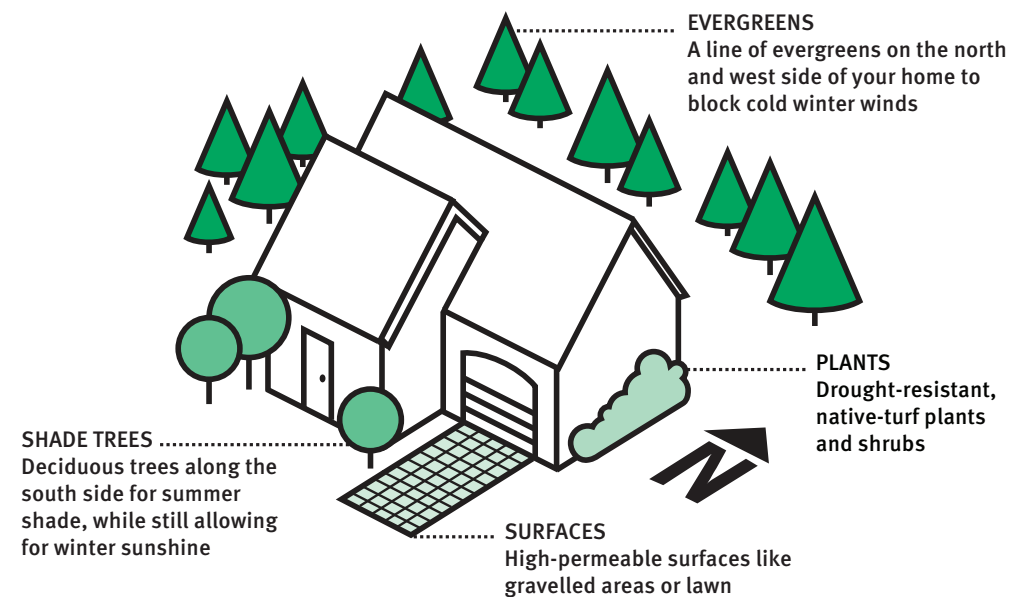
### Reducing Lawn and Garden Irrigation Reduces Costs

A cornerstone of eco-landscaping is reduced water use. This is because pumping water from its natural source, treating it so it's safe to drink and moving it to your tap uses a lot of energy. By reducing the amount of water you use to irrigate your lawn and gardens, you help lower the energy use and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions responsible for climate change.

### Green Space Reduces Water Flow and Storm Sewer Demand

Eco-landscaping serves other sustainability objectives as well. Lawns and gardens provide green space and help increase infiltration and decrease the flow of water off your lot. This in turn reduces the demands on the storm sewer system as less water reaches the catch basins. This also decreases contaminants entering the North Saskatchewan River and can help to reduce the overall volume of water needing to be treated by the sewage treatment centre (in areas of the city that have combined sewer systems).

### Eco-Friendly Landscaping: What to Look for





## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

### Lawns

Lawns only need 2.5 centimetres (1 inch) of water per week to stay nice and green. Keep track of how much water your lawn is getting by setting out an empty tin such as a tuna can to collect rainwater and irrigation. There's no need to water your lawn after the water in the tin reaches a depth of 2.5 centimetres (1 inch).

Learn more at: [epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/outside-your-home/Pages/lawn.aspx](http://epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/outside-your-home/Pages/lawn.aspx)

### Native Plants

Plants native to the Edmonton region are a gardener's best friend because they thrive in our local climate. They're relatively unaffected by drought, wind, extremes in temperature and the unpredictable early and late frosts of our short prairie growing season.

For more information on types of native plants suitable for landscaping, visit:  
[epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/outside-your-home/Pages/garden.aspx](http://epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/outside-your-home/Pages/garden.aspx)

### Trees

A well-placed line of evergreens on the north and west side of your home provides shelter against winter winds and reduces your home's demand for heat. Deciduous trees (trees that lose their leaves in the winter) on the south side of your house provide shade in the summer and sunshine during the winter.

### Soil, Mulch and Compost

Adequate soil depth and quality plays an important role in storing and retaining water and nutrients for vigorous growth. Provide a minimum of 15 centimetres (6 inches) for lawn areas and 30 to 45 centimetres (12 to 18 inches) for shrubs. Soil should be good quality, contain organic material such as compost and drain well. A sandy loam that feels soft and crumbles easily is the optimum texture. Cover the soil surface around your outdoor plants with compost, shredded bark, or other organic material to help maintain moisture.

Mulching in the spring reduces weeds and the need to water. Mulching in the fall protects plants against winter. Mulch also creates a habitat for beneficial insects, reducing the reliance on pesticides.

Using a backyard composting bin means you can make your own natural fertilizer and soil conditioner by composting yard waste and kitchen scraps (for example, eggshells, cores, and peels).

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### Efficient Irrigation

More than half of the water applied to lawns can be lost to evaporation and runoff due to overwatering. If you're looking at a home that has an irrigation system, check to see if it uses drip or low-volume nozzles wherever possible, as these reduce water flow rates. Automatic shut-off devices, or irrigation timers and controllers can further optimize irrigation and reduce wastage.

### Rainwater Collection

A cistern or rain barrel to capture and store rainwater for irrigation reduces runoff and the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with tap water. The water can be used to irrigate the garden (instead of using tap water) and is healthier for the plants (which saves you money by reducing your water bill).

### Rain Gardens

Rain gardens are stormwater management landscaping features to look for. They're characterized by a vegetated, shallow depression with permeable topsoil. Rain gardens provide water quality treatment, reduce runoff and allow for infiltration near where runoff originates, such as roofs, driveways and sidewalks.

### More Information on Conservation and Landscaping

EPCOR provides great efficiency and conservation tips for your yard at: [epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/outside-your-home/Pages/outside.aspx](http://epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/outside-your-home/Pages/outside.aspx)

Also, see the City of Edmonton's Low Impact Development – Best Management Practices Design Guide PDF for ideas on landscaping features such as rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavement and box planters: [edmonton.ca/city\\_government/documents/PDF/LIDGuide.pdf](http://edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/LIDGuide.pdf)

