

Eco-Landscaping

Eco-landscaping reduces waste and the need for fertilizer, chemical and water, and it saves money through reduced energy and yard maintenance costs. It also helps reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions responsible for climate change.



Ecoscope: Low maintenance landscaping

Incorporate diverse types of native, drought-resistant plants (including grasses and ground covers), practical turf areas and mulches into your landscape design to create an attractive, low maintenance yard. This type of design not only reduces water use but typically reduces fertilizer, pest and disease control requirements, helping the environment while saving you time and money. Also, group plants according to watering needs to reduce water use.



Plant 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 on the south side of your house provide shade in the summer while still allowing sunshine in during the winter.



Collect rainwater

Use a cistern or rain barrel to capture and store rainwater for irrigation. It reduces runoff and the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with tap water.



Water the lawn early in the morning

More than half of the water applied to lawns can be lost to evaporation and run-off due to over-watering. Watering during the cool part of the day reduces losses to evaporation. Single, deep waterings (25 mm / 1 inch once every 7-10 days) are more effective than several light waterings.

Adding compost or 12-15 cm (5-6 inches) of good quality top soil will help hold water and fertilizer, reducing your need for watering.



Backyard compost

Compost your yard waste and kitchen scraps (e.g. eggshells, cores and peels) to reduce waste and produce your own natural fertilizer and soil conditioner. Composting is easy, and a family of three can reduce GHG emissions by more than 125 kilograms per year. Reducing your household waste means less waste needs to be collected, transported and processed.



Mulch

Cover the soil surface around your outdoor plants with compost, shredded bark or other organic material. Mulching in the spring reduces weeds and the need to water. Mulching in the fall protects plants against winter. Mulch can also create a habitat for beneficial insects, which will help reduce reliance on pesticides.



Use a push or electric mower

Consider using a manual push or electric mower. A typical gas-powered mower produces 48 kilograms of GHG emissions in a season and as much air pollution as a car driven 550 kilometres.



Grasscycle

Leave grass clippings on your lawn when you mow. Clippings will quickly break down, helping your lawn retain moisture, adding nutrients and reducing the need for fertilizers. Keeping grass out of your garbage by grasscycling can reduce over 500 kilograms of GHG emissions per household per year. It also eliminates the need to bag the clippings, saving both time and money.

Other Tips

- » When landscaping, ensure that the lot is graded so that rainwater and snow melt runoff is absorbed or collected where it is useful.
- » Use existing, salvaged/recycled or locally available materials for landscaping.
- » Landscapes that produce food can help reduce the energy required for commercial food production, refrigeration and transportation.

Related City Websites

- » Edmonton in Bloom
edmonton.ca/BeautifyEdmonton
Learn about projects that help make Edmonton beautiful. And nominate your neighbour's yard for a Front Yards in Bloom Award! Categories include natural and edible yards.
- » Good Growing Neighbours
edmonton.ca/GoodGrowing
Tips on pesticide reduction.
- » Root for Trees
edmonton.ca/RootForTrees
Help plant more trees in the city.
- » VegInstead!
edmonton.ca/VegInstead
Grow vegetables instead of grass, even in your front yard.
- » Waste Management
edmonton.ca/waste
Information and tips on grasscycling and composting.
- » yegTreeMap
opentreemap.org/edmonton
Map trees planted on public and private property and measure their environmental value.

Other Useful Websites

- » Edmonton Horticultural Society
edmontonhort.com
Programs and activities for all levels of gardeners.
- » Edmonton Native Plant Society
edmontonnativeplantgroup.org
Information about where to buy native plants/seeds.
- » The Urban Farmer
theurbanfarmer.ca
Natural, sustainable and edible landscapes.
- » Gardening For Wildlife (Canadian Wildlife Federation)
wildaboutgardening.org
Advice, tools and resources for backyard gardening.

Recommended Reading

- » *Go Wild! with easy to grow prairie wildflowers and grasses*
Cherry Dodd, Edmonton Native Plant Group
- » *Living Near Urban Lakes*
Sarah Weaver Kipp

Change For Climate Publications

- » Change Habits For Climate: Your guide to a sustainable lifestyle
- » Change Homes For Climate: Your guide to an energy efficient and sustainable home

To download these publications, visit:
edmonton.ca/changeforclimateguides

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