



Landscaping and Lawn Care



Landscaping and a healthy lawn can improve the value of your property. Besides enhancing your home's aesthetic beauty, low-maintenance landscaping and lawncare practices can contribute to a healthy environment.

Conventional landscaping and lawn care often involves practices that affect surrounding water bodies. Applying alternative practices to landscaping and lawn care reduces soil erosion, conserves water and improves soil fertility while protecting the natural environment.

Inside you will find information on environmentally-friendly landscape design and lawn care that are not only low-maintenance, but can save you money and protect your local waterbodies.



GRDA'S WATERSHED CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Guard the Grand
GRDA's Watershed Conservation Program

Lawn Care - Things To Consider

How you manage your lawn and landscaping can have an impact on the waters around your home. Overuse of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides can run off your yard and into a nearby waterbody. To reduce any impact to local streams and lakes, think about the following:

Lawn Mowing

A few simple actions can help you improve your lawn and protect water resources in your area:

- ◆ Maintaining a grass height of 2.5 - 3" for bermudagrass and 3 - 4" for tall fescue can help build healthy root systems and nourish your lawn.
- ◆ Allowing grass clippings and leaves to remain on your lawn will provide nutrients for the soil. Investing in a mulching lawnmower can help clippings more effectively fertilize your lawn.
- ◆ Be sure not to blow yard waste into the street or sidewalk, as this can run off and have a negative effect on local waterbodies.
- ◆ If you don't use a mulching mower and rake up your yard clippings, composting is an excellent alternative to store-bought fertilizer.

Water Use

Water conservation conserves valuable resources and saves you money. This can be done in several ways:

- ◆ Lawn-moisture meters indicate how much water your lawn needs.
- ◆ Look into rain harvesting techniques such as using rain barrels.
- ◆ Watering your lawn deeply and infrequently promotes healthy root systems that retain moisture. This can usually be achieved with only 1" of water per week during the summer.

Lawn Chemicals

Herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers can all run off your lawn and affect nearby waterbodies. Proper application can help prevent impacts to water resources.

Soil testing can help you determine the appropriate balance of nutrients for your lawn - knowing what your soil needs for healthy plant growth will save you time and money.

Choose the appropriate seasons for applying lawn chemicals and be sure to follow all the instructions. Remember to keep lawn chemicals off of hard surfaces because they can run off and enter lakes and streams.





Sustainable Landscaping

Holistically caring for your lawn and landscape will protect water quality. Typically, these practices prove to be low maintenance for homeowners.

Plants that thrive in Oklahoma

There are a variety of native plants that are both beautiful and low-maintenance. Take some time to explore the kinds of plants that are native to your area, drought-resistant and support pollinators.

A great resource for discovering plants that will thrive in Oklahoma is *Oklahoma Proven: Plant Selections for Oklahoma* a publication by Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Oklahoma State University. <http://www.oklahomaproven.org/oklahoma-proven-20th-anniversary>



Arkansas Bluestar

Native to eastern Oklahoma and Arkansas, this flowering plant is perfect for home gardens.

Coneflower

Native to eastern Oklahoma, this purple flowering plant can grow up to 6 feet tall.

Redbud

Oklahoma's state tree produces stunning magenta flowers that bloom in spring.

Black Gum

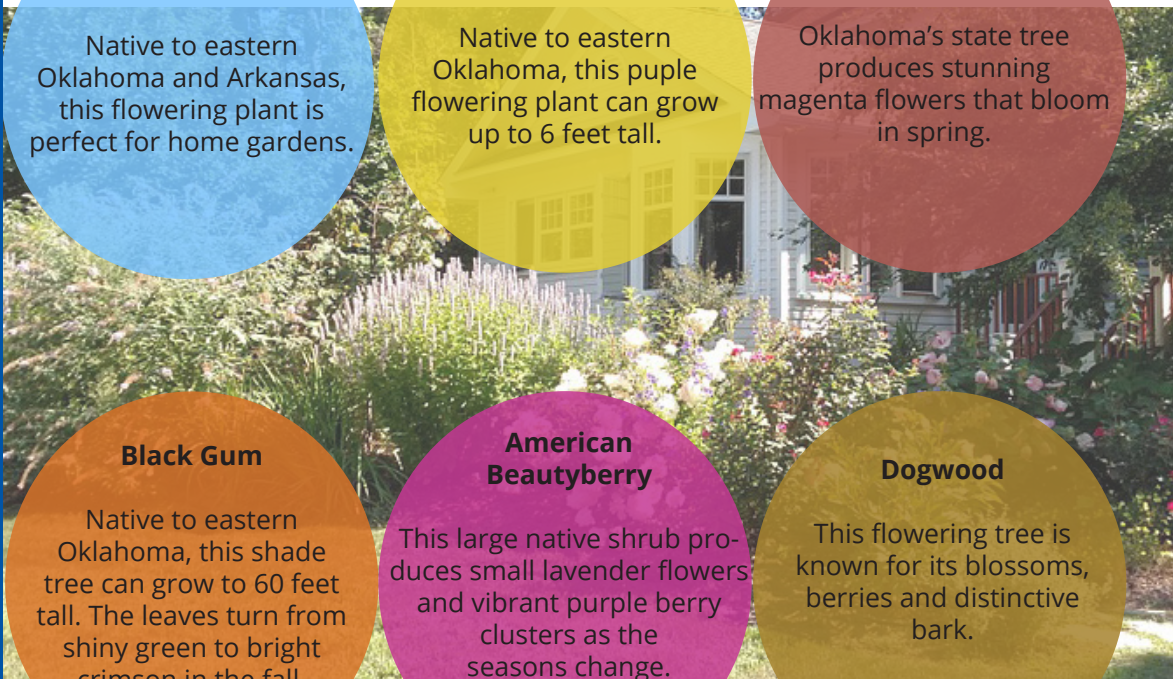
Native to eastern Oklahoma, this shade tree can grow to 60 feet tall. The leaves turn from shiny green to bright crimson in the fall.

American Beautyberry

This large native shrub produces small lavender flowers and vibrant purple berry clusters as the seasons change.

Dogwood

This flowering tree is known for its blossoms, berries and distinctive bark.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do I have to completely stop the use of fertilizers and pesticides?

A: It is best to avoid the use of these chemicals. There are ways to encourage a healthy lawn and landscape and reduce pests without using fertilizers and pesticides. Have your soil and lawn tested to determine what nutrients are appropriate to apply.

Q: Will sustainable landscaping be expensive and high-maintenance?

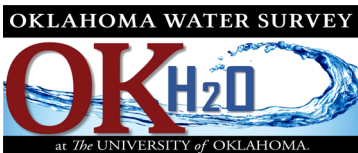
A: Landscaping can be expensive as you want it to be, but beautiful, sustainable landscaping can be cost-efficient. Because the vegetation and structure of your landscape is meant to work with the natural environment, maintenance is generally minimal. Appropriate lawn care is the first step to achieving a sustainable landscape.

Guard the Grand is an educational program with the goal of fostering an ethic of environmental stewardship in Oklahomans residing in watersheds that flow into Grand Lake O' the Cherokees.

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