

Inventory for Improving Green Spaces Near Your Home

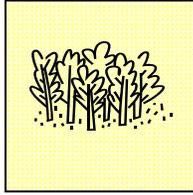
Please answer the following questions to help you assess the green spaces around your home or apartment.

1. Approximately how large is the space around your home or apartment?
2. How many hours per week do EACH of your family members spend in this area of other outdoor areas?
3. About how many different species of plants and animals live in this area. (the term animals includes bugs and worms, the terms plants includes all plants including summer gardens)
4. Where does the water that falls on this area go (both immediately and which stream or river it eventually flows into?) <http://kywater.org/watch/>
5. How many trees are on your property? Are they evergreen or do they drop their leaves in winter?
6. What percentage of this land is mowed regularly?
7. Are fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides used in this area? If so what kinds and how often are they applied.
8. Are plants in this area (including grass) watered when it does not rain? If so, what method is used to water them? (e.g. garden hose sprayers, soaker hoses, sprinklers, etc.)
9. What man-made structures (including pavement) are in the area? From what materials are they made?

Ideas for Improving your Green Space

Ideas that are free or nearly so

1. Reduce weeds and retain moisture around trees, shrubs and other plants by putting old newspapers around the plant and then covering with grass clippings or compost,.
2. Composting is nature's way of turning dead organic matter back into wonderfully fertile soil. You can buy an expensive composter but a pile of compost works as well. Find an inconspicuous place in your yard and begin piling up organic waste such as grass clippings, fallen leaves, and vegetable peelings. Using a pitchfork or shovel, turn the pile at least twice a week for best results.
<http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/smallscalecomposting.htm>
3. Find a "volunteer" tree seedling in your yard or the yard of a friend. Replant it in a sunny place and nurture it with love, water and compost. It will grow faster than you think. Check with your local Conservation District Office for free tree seedlings.
<http://www.conservation.ky.gov/>



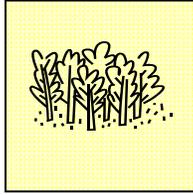
4. If you use fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides on your lawn, consider eliminating those or drastically reducing their use. Do you really need a “perfect” lawn?
http://www.eartheasy.com/grow_lawn_care.htm
5. Reduce watering to a minimal level. Reuse gray water by capturing bath and shower water and watering plants with it. <http://www.local-motion.org/greengrass.html>

Ideas under \$25

1. Consider planting only native species in your yard or garden. They are often cheaper than exotics and they generally require less water, no herbicides, pesticides, fertilizer and will not become invasive.
<http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/nativegardening/index.shtml>
2. Purchase a soaker hose (garden hose with many holes in it) and use it to water areas of grass and plants.
3. Purchase tree watering rings which make the most efficient use of water for trees.
4. Have your soil tested (or buy a soil testing kit) to see exactly how much fertilizer your lawn and/or garden needs. Apply only that amount.
6. Buy (or make) a bird feeder. This will attract birds to your yard and help control insects.
<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/attracting>
7. Purchase grass seed to make your lawn more lush and to chase out “weeds” or plant areas of warm season native grasses to provide food and shelter for wildlife and reduce mowing.

Ideas Over \$25

1. Purchase or construct a compost bin to help compost organic waste. These cost about \$100 and make composting neater and easier than the traditional method.
http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profiles0903/compost_heap.asp
2. Purchase a rain barrel to capture run off from your roof. This helps prevent storm water runoff and can be used to water plants. (Let the kids paint the rain barrel and compost bin with designs they choose.)
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/ed/rainbarrel.html>
3. Purchase a mulching lawn mower that cuts mowed grass into very small pieces that are replaced on your lawn.
[http://www.seattle.gov/util/Services/Yard/Natural Lawn & Garden Care/Natural Lawn Care/MULCHINGL_200311261655016.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/util/Services/Yard/Natural_Lawn_&_Garden_Care/Natural_Lawn_Care/MULCHINGL_200311261655016.asp)
4. Consider replanting at least some of your lawn with plants that do not require mowing and also prevent runoff more effectively than grass. (E.g. shrubs, trees, groundcover) <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/partnerships/greenscapes/owners.htm>
5. Plant a rain garden to capture excess water from your yard.
<http://www.bluegrassraingardenalliance.org/>



6. Create a butterfly garden or other wildlife habitat garden for wildlife such as bees and other beneficial insects. <http://fw.ky.gov/navigation.asp?cid=229&NavPath=C108>