



5 WATER EFFICIENTLY

Newly planted flowers, grasses, trees, and shrubs should be watered frequently until they are well rooted, which may take two growing seasons. Once established, plants should be watered less frequently so they will develop deep roots and be better able to withstand drought. You can also use mulches in flower/shrub beds to reduce water evaporation from the soil.

6 MAINTENANCE

- Weed Control:** Weeding diligently in spring—when newly emerging natives have not yet had a chance to canopy over the ground—is the best way to keep weeds under control. For deep-rooted perennial weeds, use a putty knife or dandelion fork tool. Remove the entire root. If you don't, it's likely that the weed will regenerate from parts left in the soil.
- Dividing:** Divide crowded plants in spring and fall. When you spot plants that are encroaching on their neighbors, shovel-divide by inserting a round-point digging shovel into the plant with the back of the shovel against what you want to keep and the front of the shovel next to what you want to remove. Pull back on the shovel and pop the unwanted portion of the plant out of the ground.

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CONTACT US

WEB www.freshcoastguardians.com
PHONE (414) 225-2222



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NATURAL LANDSCAPING

Manage Water Where it Falls



TIRED OF A YARD DOMINATED BY LAWN?

Why not try natural landscaping with colorful, native plants, ornamentals, or a combination of the two to grow a prairie in your yard. Native plants have deep root systems that help break up soil, allowing more water to drain into the ground. They also help promote a healthy and vibrant natural landscape with habitat for local birds, bees, and butterflies.

With reduced irrigation needs and higher survival rates of native plants during drought, you might find yourself buying fewer replacements each year and saving money on water bills. Many improved varieties and hybrids of native species are available that offer ease of care, color, variation, and extensive blooming. Also, you may use fewer chemicals to eliminate pests or promote growth in natural gardens, and that translates into cleaner water and cleaner air for you, your children, pets, and neighbors.



INCORPORATING A NATURAL LANDSCAPE

1 START WITH A PLAN

Sketch your yard, showing the buildings, trees, shrubs, gardens and grass areas. Consider how you use the various areas of your yard, how you want your yard to look, the amount of maintenance you plan to give it, and what you can afford. Make note of the areas of your landscape that require the most water. The purpose of planning is to design a landscape that will have the appearance and function you desire while conserving water.



2 SELECT APPROPRIATE PLANTS

Select trees, shrubs, flowers and grasses that are adapted to your region's soil and climate. Many improved varieties and hybrids of native species are available that offer ease of care, color variation and extensive blooming. Most require less water and have fewer pest problems than non-adapted exotic plants.

3 PREPARE THE GROUND

Whether you have acquired bags of seed, plugs to plant, or sod to unroll, removing the existing vegetation will be the first step to establish your new yard. As always, before you dig, call **Digger's Hotline (811 or 1-800-242-8511)**.

WAYS TO REMOVE YOUR LAWN

- **Cut and Replace:** A sod cutter is the fastest way to remove a lawn. Cut it into strips, roll it up, and either remove the strips or flip them over to compost in place. For smaller lawns, use a shovel for the same process.
- **Smoother:** Cut grass as short as possible. Cover the entire area with cardboard or newspaper (10-12 layers). Water the cardboard or paper, cover with a layer of compost, then mulch at least 4" thick. You can scatter grass and/or wild flower seeds in the compost if you're looking to create a meadow (before you apply the mulch). This method adds organic matter to soil and requires minimal labor, without need to dispose of turf.
- **Solarize:** During warm weather, place a sheet of black plastic over the area of lawn you want removed and place rocks along the edges. The grass should die in 1-2 months. Once the grass is dead, turn up the soil and break it up with a hoe.



Don't feel up to the task? Call your local landscape company or garden center.

4 PLANTING

Place plants in holes 1 foot apart. Dig each hole twice as wide as the plant's roots and deep enough to keep the plant even with the existing grade. Give the plants a good soaking of water until the plants are established (unless it rains).