

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

# GreenScapes Tip Sheet



The economic and environmental cost of waste materials, water, pesticides, fuels, and oils from landscaping and grounds keeping operations can easily be reduced or eliminated with updated landscaping methods. Think how you might be able to incorporate the following tips into your daily operations and use the tables below to help you track your savings:

## WASTE

### Reduce

- Select low maintenance/slow growing plants and grasses.
- Reduce or eliminate plastic silt fencing and substitute with blankets, berms, and filtersocks made of compost for erosion control.
- Switch from pressure-treated wood to plastic lumber for decks, benches, and signs.
- Return wooden pallets and other shipping materials to your supplier whenever possible.
- When replacing an existing hardscape or structure, deconstruct, reuse and recycle all possible materials such as metal, wood, shingles, concrete, and pavement.
- Minimize turf grass and paved areas - keep as much natural area as possible.
- Cluster structures to maximize open space.
- Minimize site and soil disruptions to the maximum extent possible.

### Reuse

- Take apart non-returnable wood pallets to reuse the wood (e.g., edging around plant beds) or chip it for use on site for mulch.
- Chip woody waste and tree clippings into mulch for use on-site.
- Donate healthy plants to local nonprofit organizations when reconfiguring or removing trees and shrubs from your landscape.
- Reuse or increase the use and efficiency of existing sites before cutting into new sites.
- Reuse soils within the work site; create mounds or berms to serve as wind breaks or to add visual interest.

### Recycle

- Recycle bedding trays and plant containers from annuals and other greenery.
- Triple rinse and recycle plastic commercial containers.
- Recycle used oil and tires from your vehicles and equipment.
- Provide recycling receptacles next to trash receptacles.
- Send green waste and food waste that cannot be composted on site to a local composting facility.
- Reclaim land - turn waste land into usable property and a valuable asset.

### Rebuy

- Select plastic lumber made from recycled bottles and bags for benches and other outdoor structures.
- Incorporate rubberized asphalt (made from recycled tires) for parking lots, walking, running, bike, or cart paths.
- Purchase patio blocks and lawn edging containing recovered plastic or postconsumer rubber.
- Amend soils and turf with high quality compost.
- Use recycled glass for golf course bunker sand, beach sand, or filter media.
- Specify high performance concrete, which can contain fly ash and/or other recycled materials to double the life of conventional pavement, wall, and bridge applications.
- Restructure waste disposal contracts to pay only for waste actually disposed - weight-based versus fixed rate; if a weight-based rate is not possible and your dumpster is only half-full each time -- switch to less frequent pickups.
- Install composting toilets in remote locations such as parks and golf courses to save on waste disposal costs.

Baseline Waste Disposal	Baseline Cost of Disposal	Waste Reduction	Cost Savings

## WATER

### Reduce

- Conserve water through xeriscaping.
- Incorporate compost into the soil to help improve water absorption and retention.
- Top-dress your turf with compost.
- Reduce non-permeable hardscape wherever possible.
- Place mulch over a plant's root zone to reduce moisture evaporation and conserve water.
- Install drip irrigation systems.
- Install composting toilets in remote locations to reduce water and servicing requirements.
- Clean equipment with compressed air whenever possible. Grass clippings and debris should be collected and composted.

### Reuse

- Use gray water, reclaimed water, or collected rainwater for irrigation and equipment wash downs.

### Recycle

- Recycle gray water for irrigation and equipment wash downs.

### Rebuy

- Buy hoses, tubing, trickle irrigation systems made from recovered plastic and old tires.
- Use biobased cleaners and solvents for equipment.
- Install a green vegetated roof to reduce or eliminate stormwater and "heat island" effect.
- Purchase and incorporate plants that require minimal or no supplemental watering.

Baseline Water Consumption	Baseline Cost of Water	Water Savings	Cost Savings

## ENERGY

### Reduce

- Strategically plant vegetation outside and around buildings to reduce indoor heating and cooling needs.
- Use hand or electric equipment where ever feasible to reduce emissions.
- Use biobased fuels and lubricants in place of petroleum.
- Implement scheduled equipment maintenance program for increased efficiency & reduced emissions

### Rebuy

- Purchase biodiesel and biobased lubricants for your equipment.
- Compost makes an excellent air filter media for volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
- Specify Green Buildings requirements for building structures.
- Plant trees to replace those removed or damaged during construction.
- Buy locally produced goods and services whenever possible to reduce transportation emissions and costs.
- Purchase or rent fuel efficient vehicles for your fleet.
- Use high efficiency lighting for roadways, parking lots, security, and landscaping.
- Use solar powered lighting and signage wherever possible.
- Utilize solar, wind, and other renewable energy sources. Purchase "green power" from renewable energy sources if available.

Baseline Energy Consumption	Energy Costs	Energy Reduction	Cost Savings

# FERTILIZERS AND PESTICIDES

## Reduce

- Use compost as a soil amendment to help reduce the need for chemical fertilizers or pesticides
- Incorporate native plants in your landscape— they generally require less fertilizers and pesticides
- Implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program
- Spot treat whenever possible
- Set mower blades higher to fight weeds and diseases without pesticides
- Grasscycle—leave grass clippings in place (don't bag) when mowing
- Produce less green waste by limiting fertilizer and water use
- Use mulch around trees and in flowering beds as weed prevention
- Purchase only what you need and can use for a specific treatment
- Return unused excess product to supplier if possible
- If you cannot return excess product, contact your local solid waste agency and your state pesticide disposal program to determine if a waste or pesticide program now commonly called "Clean Sweep" is available. These efforts by state and local governments typically focus on agricultural pesticides, but may also include other pesticides used by homeowners, golf courses, and highway departments

## Rebuy

- Purchase organic, biobased, or slow-release fertilizers
- Use biopesticides instead of conventional pesticides

Baseline fertilizer and pesticides consumed	Cost of fertilizer and pesticides	Reduction in fertilizer and pesticides use	Cost Savings




[www.epa.gov/greenscapes](http://www.epa.gov/greenscapes)

