

Save Money and Protect the Environment



Whether you are a municipality, homeowner's association, or backyard gardener it is possible for you to save money and protect the environment at the same time. How do you do this? By planting native plants. Native plants have many environmental and economic benefits. And best of all, they pay for themselves over time.

REDUCING POLLUTANTS

Unlike lawns, native plant gardens require little to no mowing. In the U.S. lawn mowers account for 40% of all gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment and emit significant amounts of toxic and carcinogenic pollutants and contribute to noise pollution. Although you may want a green, irrigated lawn, irrigation promotes destructive insects that increase the expense of lawn care. Lawns are primarily non-native grasses and require the use of significant amounts of fertilizers and pesticides that lead to environmental degradation of soil and contaminate streams and groundwater. Native plants absorb and store carbon dioxide and reduce the effects of harmful gardening practices and products.

CONSERVING WATER

Native plants use 4 times less water per year than lawns thereby conserving water and reducing costs for households and cities. The deep, absorbent roots of native plants mitigate stormwater runoff thus protecting areas from rising water tables, flooding and nutrient runoff which improve water quality for communities and homeowners.

SAVING ENERGY

Over a lifetime native gardens provide significant returns on investment that cannot be beat. In comparison to lawns, you can save as much as 90% on native landscape maintenance costs including mowing and herbicide treatments. Coupled with the use of shade trees, shrubs, vines and grasses that lower heating effects and energy demands such as air conditioning, the savings add up. Providing food resources and habitat for wildlife, locally appropriate native plants support biodiversity and beautify your garden

Lawns are the single largest irrigated crop in the U.S. with a surface area of approx. 128,000 sq. kilometers, 3 times more than irrigated corn.

70%

Decrease in water use per year for cities and households after replacing turf grass with native plants

75%

Cost savings 4-6 years after replacing turf grass with native plants

90%

Up to 90% cost savings over 10 years for maintenance of native plants in comparison to turf grass

Audubon Plants for Birds Program: audubon.org/plantsforbirds

Search our native plant database: audubon.org/nativeplants

Municipal Engagement Toolkit: works.audubon.org/resources/native-plant-municipal-engagement-toolkit-0

✓ Encourage your local nurseries to carry more native plants and seeds.

✓ Keep your costs down by buying the smallest locally-grown plants available.

Photo: Mike Bellame