

earth Day



recycle. save water. reduce energy.



History

Earth Day was founded in 1970 by US Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wisconsin) and is held annually on April 22nd. Many countries around the world recognize this date to encourage environmentally aware behaviors such as recycling, using energy efficiently, and reducing or reusing disposable items. These concepts now coincide with managing commercial properties and creating a sustainable environment. The LEED movement is a modern day extension and practice of this philosophy. The EPA defines sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”



Air Quality Influence

Landscaping has its greatest influence by cleaning and producing the air we breathe. Trees, shrubbery, and turf join forces to remove dust and other particles from the air. The leaves of shrubs and trees also absorb carbon dioxide from the air that is used for plant structure and function; plus produces oxygen for us to breathe. Turf is also highly efficient at converting carbon dioxide to oxygen, a process that helps clean the air. For example, a turf area just 50 feet by 50 feet absorbs carbon dioxide, ozone, hydrogen fluoride, and peroxyacetylene nitrate and produces enough oxygen to meet the breathing needs of a family of four.

Eco Friendly Maintenance Practices

APRIL 22, 2010

- Recycling** – All waste material can be separated (green waste, paper/plastic, concrete/metals) prior to being deposited at the recycling center. Grass clippings typically comprise 10 - 20% of the solid waste collected by communities on a yearly basis. As grass decomposes in landfills, the nutrients contribute to landfill leaching and groundwater contamination.
- Mulching Mowers** – A mulching mower typically has rotary blades and a mechanism that chops grass clippings finely and blows them back down into the lawn (without a mess). Grass clippings returned to the lawn provide up to 25% of your lawn's total fertilizer needs.
- Water Conservation** – Irrigation systems need to be managed to reduce over-watering. Several products exist to retrofit existing systems and immediately conserve water. Three examples are; weather based controllers, drip irrigation in planter areas, and rotary spray nozzles in turf areas.
- Slow-Release Fertilizers** – Slow Release Fertilizers are a form of water-insoluble nitrogen. This fertilizer is considered more environmentally friendly because leaching and run-off are prevented. Landscape chemical applications that make their way into waterways can cause serious problems to ecosystems and pollute drinking water.

Mulch

Organic mulches such as wood chips, grass clippings, or other locally available materials help improve the health of landscape bed areas. The primary benefits are as follows:

Water Usage Mulch also helps moderate the soil temperature and retain moisture during dry weather, reducing the need for watering.

Erosion Control Mulch prevents soil splashing, which not only stops erosion but keeps soil-borne diseases from splashing up onto the plants.

Soil Quality Nutrients Organic mulch can improve the soil structure. As mulch decays, the material becomes topsoil. Mulch helps prevent soil compaction.

Natural Weed Barrier A layer of mulch will help prevent the germination of many weed seeds, reducing the need for cultivation or the use of herbicides. It provides a cover of uniform color and interesting texture to the surface.



Shade Trees

When selecting and planting a tree, make sure to plan for the future. Trees are a natural resource that improve air and water quality, plus save us energy. Trees become more valuable as they mature, so appropriate selection and placement is crucial for long term investment. Other variables that need to be considered are mature size of the tree, its proximity to any building and the planting environment (soil, light, water). Shading the south and west exposures of a building will provide the most value through reducing energy costs. The root systems of trees improve water quality, resulting in less runoff and erosion. This allows more recharging of the ground water supply. Most importantly, planting trees is an excellent way for people to reduce to zero the damage of their own carbon footprint.