

ATL-NJ: Sustainable Landscaping Checklist (Homeowner)

How “Green” can you make your yard maintenance practices?

KEY:



Grass Care (Mowing / Edging): If a grass lawn is part of your plan, keep it on the long side and allow grass clippings to naturally fertilize it ...Choose an electric - battery mower rather than a gas-operated mower or edger.

- Maintain grass height at 3 - 3.5 inch, longer during droughts.
- Mulch mow. Leave grass clippings on the lawn.
- Rake or sweep lawn clippings from walkways. Do not use leaf blowers.
- Use an electric mow and an electric trimmer.
- Low mow. Plant fescue grass or bentgrass.
- Manual mow and trim with manual clippers.
- No mow (where permitted).

Leaf Care: Leaves are a terrific source for lawn mulching ...if you must blow, keep it to a minimum and choose an electric-battery blower rather than a gas-operated blower.

- Blow leaves only during spring / fall cleanup.
- Rake leaves first, then do minimal blowing.
- Accept a few leaves on the lawn.
- Blow leaves using an electric blower.
- Bag excess leaves for disposal (don't blow them into the street).
- Mulch leaves into the grass with an electric mulching mower.
- Blow leaves into borders and shrubbery for mulching, using an electric blower or mower.
- Bag leaves and use them for mulch / compost.
- Bag leaves and use them later to support your compost bin.

Bed Care: Mulching beds retains moisture, creates habitat and prevents soil erosion.

- Mulch beds.
- Use non-dyed mulch or leaf mulch.
- Mulch leaf beds using the leaves from your trees.
- Leave the leaves through the last freeze date to support pollinators.
- Leave the leaves in beds year around.
- Expand your beds to reduce your lawn.

Plants: Select native plants appropriate for amount of sun/ shade, climate and habitat.

Remove non-native invasive plants. Follow the “Do Not Plant / Do Plant” guidance. [Plant This](#)
Give preference to deer-resistant plants that are host plants for butterflies, such as milkweed.

- Plant drought-tolerant species.
- Plant companion plant combination as a natural pest management strategy.
- Leave the flower heads / branches for pollinator habitat and to permit self sowing.
- Learn what “weeds” in your yard may be foraged (for example, Purslane).

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Compost: All your yard waste and veggie/fruit food waste to create your own compost.

- Create a compost bin.
- Put excess leaves and food waste in your compost bin.
- Use compost in your flower / veggie gardens instead of buying compost.

Water: Water only when needed and never in the height of the day; explore ways you can capture and reuse stormwater.

- Water beds and lawn in early AM or late afternoon.
- Water beds only when needed (i.e. not after a rainstorm).
- Install drip irrigation instead of a sprinkler system.
- Install a rain barrel to capture stormwater.
- Install a rain garden or other appropriate green infrastructure.

Pest Management: Avoid chemical pesticides / herbicides and opt for natural solutions to control pests.

- Fertilize only during approved months (3/1 - 11/14).
- Use plant combinations that naturally manage pests.
- Use organic materials (no chemicals) for fertilizer (for example, corn gluten / chicken manure / compost).
- Use organic materials as part of integrated pest management (for example, botanical oils, neem oil).
- Use beneficial insects or bacteria.

Other ...How else can you make your property even more green?

- Don't look for perfection in a lawn; accept some leaves and weeds.
- Plant native shade trees, especially Oaks, the “most powerful plant of all”
- Replace lawns with native shrubs and mulch the beds and borders.
- Repave your driveway or patio with pervious pavement or porous material.



Mulch mow leaves and grass



Put excess yard waste in your compost bin



Choose low mow grasses for your yard



Manual mow



Install a rain barrel



Plant native flowers



Mulched beds, less lawn



sustainable lawn

Example of a highly



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