



Sustainable Landscapes

Urban gardens can either improve our environmental quality or contribute to long-term pollution. The City of Long Beach invites you to adopt more sustainable gardening and landscaping practices at your home and business.

▶ **Build Healthy Soils**

Healthy soils are essential to urban landscapes. Organic matter (compost or humus) supports healthy plant growth while reducing water and fertilization requirements. Healthy plants are disease- and pest-resistant.



▶ **Use Native Plants**

Native plants are often pest-resistant and adapted to local conditions. They need less water and pesticide applications than non-native species. They provide habitat for butterflies and birds. To identify native plants that will flourish in your garden, visit: www.mynativeplants.com.



▶ **Start Composting**

There are four basic ingredients for composting: nitrogen, carbon, water and air. Composting is like cooking, and the easiest compost recipe calls for blending roughly equal parts of green or wet material high in Nitrogen (vegetable scraps) with brown or dry materials high in carbon (leaves, straw, sawdust). Layer or mix these materials in a pile or enclosure. Water and fluff to add air. Microorganisms will break down the material over time.



▶ **Irrigate Efficiently**

Over watering costs money. Use water-efficient irrigation systems, such as drip or low-output sprinkler heads, to save money, time, and deliver water to plant roots. Schedule your watering based on the weather. Use soil probes, available at your local gardening store, to monitor soil moisture before watering.



Sustainable Landscaping Best Practices

▶ Use Mulch

Use shredded or chipped plant materials as a mulch cover. Mulch insulates plant roots, reduces weeds, minimizes water loss, while controlling erosion, dust, and mud problems. As mulch decomposes it improves the soil condition and adds nutrients.



Increasingly popular as a fertilizer, seaweed is also an excellent mulch. Here, it blankets the soil of a potato patch.

▶ Reduce use of Chemical Pesticides

Use integrated pest management (IPM) or insecticidal soaps as an alternative to applying chemical pesticides and herbicides. Pesticides and herbicides eventually make their way off site and contribute to pollution.



Chemical pesticides often kill beneficial insects such as butterflies and ladybugs and pollution run-off. Try using an insecticidal soap.

▶ Use Recycled Materials

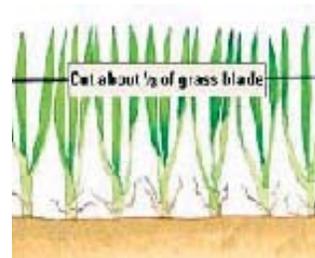
Buying “recycled content” landscaping products, such as plastic edging or lumber, conserves natural resources and strengthens markets for these recyclable materials.



Recycled plastic decking is increasingly popular for its durability, ease of maintenance and good wood look.

▶ Grasscycle Turf Areas

Use mulching mowers that leave grass clippings on the lawn when mowing. Grass clippings decompose quickly and release valuable nutrients into the soil. Grass mulching reduces water and fertilizer use, green waste and maintenance costs.



Don't cut off more than the top third of a grass blade when you mow. Leave the clippings to decompose on the lawn.

▶ Limit Fertilization

Use slow-release or organic-based formulas to reduce growth spurts that increase the need for pruning and mowing.

On-line Resources

- ▶ General Sustainable Landscaping: www.bewaterwise.com
- ▶ LA County Smart Gardening: www.ladpw.org/epd/sg/
- ▶ Long Beach Water Department: www.lbwater.org
- ▶ Native Plant Directory: www.mynativeplants.com

