Are Your Beds Earth-Kind®?



What is Earth-Kind®?

According to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Earth-Kind® "focuses on using environmentally friendly management practices to produce landscapes that are beautiful, lowmaintenance, and sustainable."

What are the Goals of Earth-Kind® Landscaping?

- The Goals are to:
- 1-Conserve water and energy
- 2-Reduce pesticide and fertilizer use
- **3-Recycle landscape wastes**

How to Transform Your Landscape into an Earth-Kind® Landscape

There are 10 Earth-Kind® principles you can use to change your existing landscape into an Earth-Kind® landscape.

Let's explore these principles from http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind

1 - Mulch

Add a 3-inch layer of plant-derived mulch to the landscape.

Mulch reduces the amount of water needed in the landscape. This helps even more if drip irrigation is placed under the mulch.

1 - Mulch

Mulch helps by:

Preventing weeds and erosion.

Regulating soil temperature.

Providing organic matter for the soil.

Mulch







2 - Low-volume Irrigation

- Watering with micro or drip irrigation is 90% efficient because water is applied slowly and where needed.
- It prevents runoff and evaporation.
- It prevents damage to plants by keeping water off the plants' leaves.

2 - Low-volume Irrigation

Select from a wide variety of products and kits.

- Supplies are available online or in stores.
- The internet provides installation instructions.

Low-volume Irrigation



3 - Irrigation auditing/evaluation

Check your system for leaks or sprinkler heads that are damaged.

Measure the sprinkler output and coverage to be sure the entire area is included and to determine how long to run the system.

3 – Irrigation auditing/evaluation

You can conduct an evaluation of the system by using a tuna can to measure the amount of precipitation.

A licensed irrigation specialist can be hired to perform tests and/or repair the system.

Irrigation Auditing/Evaluation



4 - Cycle and Soak Watering

Program your system to run several shorter cycles instead of watering all at once to save water.

This is very important on clay soil to prevent runoff.

4 - Cycle and Soak Watering

Some irrigation system controllers can be programmed to cycle water.

- Move manual sprinklers around instead of completely watering an area at one time.
- Use for hand-watering too.

Cycle and Soak Watering



5 – Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

IPM uses cultural, biological, and mechanical pest control.

Examples – pest and disease tolerant plants, physically removing a pest, using a pest's natural enemies.

5 - Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Chemicals are used only when needed because of pest populations.

- Select the least toxic product for the problem.
- Avoid broad-spectrum insecticides that will also kill beneficials.

IPM



IPM



6 - Composting

Convert leaves, grass clippings, and pruning waste into compost.

Properly manage the compost pile to eliminate odor and to have a soil amendment ready to use in a few months.

6 - Composting

Compost is important because:
It contains nutrients plants need.
It improves soil structure.
It is free.

Composting



Composting



7 – Fertilizing Based on Soil Tests

Have a soil sample on your lawn or landscape analyzed every 3 years to determine what nutrients need to be added or withheld.

The soil sample results will tell you exactly what nutrients are needed.

Soil Test

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Fertilizing Based on Soil Test



8 – Rainwater Harvesting

Collecting and storing rainwater can reduce your water bill.

Rainwater is pure – no chemicals.

Place a rain barrel under the downspout from a gutter to collect rainwater.

Rainwater Harvesting



Rainwater Harvesting



9 - Preparing Planting Areas

Prepare the soil properly to reduce the need for fertilizers in beds.

Prepare the soil to reduce disease problems and the amount of water needed.

9 - Preparing Planting Areas

Add compost to improve the soil by adding nutrients to encourage the roots to grow deeper.

Use raised beds to improve plant performance in areas with poorly draining soil.

Preparing Planting Areas



Preparing Planting Areas



10 – Turf Maintenance

Reduce the lawn's water needs by mowing higher to promote a deeper root system, reduce plant stress, and provide more shade for the soil.

Leave grass clippings on the lawn.

10 – Turf Maintenance

Mulch grass clippings to return organic matter to the soil.

Turf Maintenance



Turf Maintenance



Water Conservation Resources
 Water Conservation
 Low Volume Irrigation
 Irrigation Systems Auditing
 Mulch

Water Conservation Resources

- Rainwater Harvesting
- Raised Beds

Landscaping for Energy Conservation

Landscaping for Energy Conservation Part 1

Landscaping for Energy Conservation Part 2

- Landscaping for Energy Conservation
 - Landscape Design
 - Plant Selection
 - Soil Improvement

- Reduction of Fertilizer and Pesticide Use
 - Beneficials in the Garden
 - Fertilization





Reduction of Fertilizer and Pesticide Use

- Native Habitat
- Natural Nutrients

Reduction of Yard Wastes Entering Landfills

- **Fall Practices**
- Composting Leaves
- Composting

Another Great Source

Texas Smartscape – Landscape Water Conservation

https://txsmartscape.com

Texas Smartscapes

7 Steps to a Smart Yard
1-Plan and Design
2-Reduce Turf
3-Soil
4-Planting

Texas Smartscapes

<u>7 Steps to a Smart Yard</u>
5-Mulch
6-Water-Wise
7-Maintenance

Resources

Aggie Horticulture Texas AgriLife Extension Texas Smartscape

BCMGA We Are Here to Help You!

- Website bcmgtx.org
- BCMGA Facebook
- BCMGA YouTube
- eMail <u>BCMGardeners@yahoo.com</u>
- Call Taylor County Extension Office at 325-672-6048

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Big Country Master Gardener Association

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