

HOW TO REMOVE YOUR LAWN

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- Turf covers 32 million acres of land in U.S., which is 2% of the land mass!
- Lawn mowers account for 5% of air pollution (a 3.5 hp lawnmower for one hour = driving an automobile 350 miles)
- 30-60% of urban fresh water is used to water lawns
- 2000 sft lawn produces 600-800 lb. clippings per summer

WHAT KIND OF LAWN DO YOU HAVE:

- Turf without perennial weeds
- Turf with perennial weeds like Bermuda Grass, St. Augustine Grass (invasive running grasses) or Oxalis – needs a different strategy

GENERAL PRINCIPLES Natural processes can aide you, shade out lawn and let it decompose. Must be persistant and thorough, especially with perennial weeds.

TECHNIQUES:

Scalp (and then smother)

- Weed Whacker (String Trimmer)
- Lawn mower, on lowest setting
- Sheep!

Sod cut and flip

- You can flip the sod over so the grass is upside-down. Let it rot.
- Edge pieces can be flipped and piled into mounds

Sod cut and give away

- Put an ad on Craigslist or Freecycle

Solarize

- During hot weather
- Scalp the turf
- (optional, add compost or manure)
- Moist soil
- Clear plastic
- Tack down edges
- No air pockets
- 6-8 weeks
- Sterilizes the top 3-4” of soil

Chicken Tractor

HydroMechanical Obliteration www.californiacompliant.com

Rototill

Remove

- Small areas, use pick & shovel
- Rent a sod-cutter if grade too high, or noxious weeds are present
- Remove to landfill or other location to dry out thoroughly
- Two passes may be necessary
- Rototill, and rake out Bermuda
- Follow up by spot weeding anything that re-sprouts

Sheet compost

- One possible lawn removal “recipe”
 - 1” manure or alfalfa (high N)
 - 5 layers newspapers (weed barrier)
 - 2” compost
 - 3” free arbor mulch
 - 1” purchased bark chips on top
- Layers of organic matter that you can plant directly into
- Make a planting pocket of good soil
- Similar to Lasagna Gardening

CALCULATOR: Bulk materials are measured in cubic yards. To figure how many yards you need: Square foot coverage (width x length) X number of inches of depth. Then divide by 324. Example: to put 3” of mulch on a 20 x 30 area = 600sft
 $3 \times 600 = 1800 / 324 = 5.555 = 5 \frac{1}{2}$ yards.

INTRODUCING “NATURAL FRONT YARDS”

www.naturalfrontyards.com

EarthCare’s goals with this program:

- Helping the planet by making lawn replacement easy and inexpensive
- Lower cost due to screening clients, smaller plants, minimal procedures, less sourcing and design time.
- Improve soil health naturally over time, counteract compaction with AACT, oyster shell and fungi
- Save water, save the air, save money, help native birds/bees

“NATURAL FRONT YARDS DETAILS:

- For front yards only, if qualified
- Starts at \$3/sft. (compare to typical landscape costs of \$10-\$20/sft.)
- Choose Add-ons to customize
- Maintenance for 1 year included

- Limited choices & smaller plants
- Help with the rebate paperwork
- Primarily CA natives
- Choose from 5 Design Themes
 1. California Coastal
 2. Contemporary
 3. Mediterranean
 4. Zen/Meditative
 5. Woodland

PROCEDURES:

- Scalp lawn (not effective for Bermuda & Oxalis)
- Carve back soil at edges of hardscape (use this soil to make mounds)
- Sprinkle with oyster shell powder
- Install valves & controller
- Cover ground with newspapers and then “free arborist” mulch, thickly
- Arrange small drought tolerant plants, with proper spacing
- Plant in mulch in planting pockets, using mycorrhizae on the scuffed-up root balls
- Attach drip irrigation lines/emitters on surface
- Put an attractive mulch on top, can make contrasting paths
- Spray with AACT (Compost Tea)

REBATES: www.valleywater.org

- Santa Clara Valley Water District offers rebates to replace your lawn with appropriate plants, drip irrigation and permeable surfaces.
- \$.75/sft up to \$1,000, material costs reimbursed
- Commercial properties up to \$10,000
- Palo Alto, Morgan Hill and Milpitas will match these amounts

RESOURCES:

Comparative example: www.santa-monica.org/epd/news/gardengarden.htm
Going Native Garden Tour – April www.goingnativegardentour.org
California Native Plant Society www.cnps.org
Gardening with Natives Yahoo group (fine for beginners to experts)
Yerba Buena Demonstration Garden www.yerbabuenanursery.com
EarthCare’s affordable lawn replacement program www.naturalfrontyards.com
California Native Garden Foundation www.cngf.org
A wiki site for Sustainable Landscaping with lists of professionals and pictures
www.landscapestandards.com

ALTERNATIVES TO LAWNS

Inspiration and Ideas for Ecological Design

Deva Luna

5/16/09

WHY DO WE LIKE LAWNS?

- Lawns do some things best
- Traditional—England & East Coast
- Green denotes lush, moist, abundant
- Negative space is a restful contrast
- Historically “safe”—no hidden enemies
- To fit in with neighborhood style
- Maybe we don’t know what else to do

WHAT’S WRONG WITH LAWNS?

- Monoculture is ecologically unbalanced
- High water useage
- High fossil fuel input—gasoline, chemicals
- Pesticides & herbicides are poisonous
- Reduces habitat diversity
- Labor intensive

STYLES & INTERPRETATIONS

- California Native
- Asian/Japanese
- Modern/Contemporary
- English Cottage Garden
- Woodland
- Formal/European/Italian/French
- Mediterranean
- Eclectic

IDEAS

- Children’s Garden
- Fairy Garden
- Butterfly Garden
- Water Garden
- Habitat Garden
- Bird Watching Garden
- Sculpture Garden
- Edible Garden
- Herb Garden
- Cutting Flower Garden
- Zen Meditation Garden
- Feng Shui Garden
- Cactus/Desert Garden

- Rock Garden
- Games
- Dog garden (include a ‘digging area’ to hide bones)
- Electric train garden
- Outdoor camping area with a fire circle

RESOURCES

Going Native Garden Tour - April	goingnativegardentour.org
California Native Plant Society	www.cnps.org
Yerba Buena Demonstration Garden	www.yerbabuenanursery.com
Professional Lawn Replacement	www.naturalfrontyards.com
California Native Garden Foundation	www.cngf.org
Sustainable Landscaping Site with lists of professionals and pictures	www.landscapistandards.com

HERBAL “LAWNS”

- Woolly Thyme, Creeping Thyme, Elfin Thyme
- Chamomile
- Yarrow
- Sweet Woodruff
- Corsican Mint
- Yerba Buena

MEADOWS of “No Mow” Grasses

- Seasonal changes
- Flowers sway in the breeze
- Can be mowed as a traditional lawn
- Can be weed whacked annually
- Provide habitat for birds, butterflies
- Can be interplanted with wildflowers

Running Grasses

Dune Sedge	<i>Carex pansa</i>
Foothill Sedge	<i>C. praegracilis</i>
Red Fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i> (<i>Molate and Jughandle var.</i>)
Idaho Fescue	<i>Festuca idahoensis</i>

Bunching Grasses

Berkeley Sedge	<i>Carex divulsa</i>
California Fescue	<i>Festuca californica</i>
Leafy Reed Grass	<i>Calamagrostis foliosa</i>
June Grass	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>
Purple Needle Grass	<i>Nasella pulchra</i>

ESTABLISHING A MEADOW

- Relaxed attitude around perfection/change
- Decide on type of grass
- Mixed with flowers?
- Transplants or seed?
- Pre-germination of existing weed seeds

- Weeding important until established

ECO-LAWN: Mixture of clover, yarrow & dwarf fescues, use seed

NATIVE MEADOW GRASS NOW AVAILABLE IN SOD (\$1.60-1.90/sft)

Capitol Wholesale Nursery www.capitolwholesalenursery.com

Native Revival Nursery www.nativer revival.com

ARTIFICIAL LAWN: never needs mowing or watering – but can't recycle it and is hot (and doesn't improve the environment like plants do)

DROUGHT TOLERANT GROUND COVERS

Manzanita, Rosemary, Dwarf Coyote Bush, Dwarf Ceanothus, Dymondia, Beach Strawberry, Lowfast Cotoneaster

SANTA MONICA DEMONSTRATION GARDEN

- 1/4 of the maintenance labor
- 3/5 of the green waste
- 1/10 of the water

To view online: www.santa-monica.org/epd/news/gardengarden.htm