



melinda myers

Waterwise Gardening

www.melindamyers.com

Too Much, Not enough and never when you need it – Sound familiar? Designing a waterwise landscape can help increase gardening success, reduce water use, and improve water quality.

“Proper landscaping reduces nitrate leaching from the soil into the water supply and reduces surface water runoff, keeping phosphorus and other pollutants out of our waterways and preventing septic system overload”. www.projectevergreen.org

It Matters

Everything we do in our homes and landscape impact our water quality

Contact Underground Utility Service at least 3 days before digging
811 (and in Wisconsin you can also file on-line at diggershotline.com)

Evaluate Your Landscape Design

www.localscape.com Salt Lake City, UT

Look at various areas of landscape to maximize water absorption and minimize water use

Large open spaces in front and back yard

Often include recreational areas

Lawn often used

Reduce Lawn Areas?

A Few Examples

Lawn Alternatives

Eco-friendly lawn care

Mow high and Often

Sharpen blades to save time, fuel and water

Leave clippings on the lawn

Double cut long clippings

Sweep cuttings & fertilizer off walks and drives

https://www.melindamyers.com/articles/eco-friendly-lawn-care?ccm_paging_p=63

https://www.melindamyers.com/articles/lawn-care-basics?ccm_paging_p=21

https://www.melindamyers.com/audio-video/melindas-garden-moment-audio-tips/lawn-landscape-design/improve-your-lawn-and-save-time-by-sharpening-the-mower-blades?ccm_paging_p=10

Allow your lawn to go dormant to save water
(desert climates a different issue)

Once it is dormant leave it that way until weather improves

lawns taken in and out of dormancy suffer most

Water ¼” every 3 weeks during extended drought

Keeps crowns of plants alive - doesn't promote growth



Yes you'll have more weeds but using less water

Hardscapes

- Patios, decks and gathering spaces
 - Complement overall landscape design & home's architecture
 - Consider permeable materials
 - Surround with plantings
 - Anchor and beautifies
 - Intercept runoff before reaching the storm sewer
 - Year round maintenance

- Paths – connect areas of landscape
 - Grass and groundcovers
 - Stepping stones and plants
 - Permeable pavers
 - Safety and maintenance

Gardens

- Healthy Soil –
 - Soil Test
 - Amend (Add 1" compost to every 2" soil)
 - Sandy Soil** - Research found incorporating a 3" layer of leaf compost into top 6" of soil increased water holding capacity 2.5 times of a native sandy soil and provided almost a 7 day supply of plant available water.
 - Clay Soil** - reduces runoff, increases water absorption, creates air spaces for healthier plant growth

- Cover Crops

 - Plant and incorporate

 - https://www.melindamyers.com/audio-video/melindas-garden-moment-audio-tips/sustainable-gardening/plant-a-summer-cover-crop?ccm_paging_p=18

 - https://www.melindamyers.com/audio-video/melindas-garden-moment-audio-tips/sustainable-gardening/plant-your-own-fertilizer-cover-cropping-and-green-manuring?ccm_paging_p=16

- Compost, Plant and Rotate in one space

 - https://www.melindamyers.com/audio-video/melindas-garden-moment-audio-tips/sustainable-gardening/composting-and-raised-bed-gardening-together-in-any-space?ccm_paging_p=3

- Raised Bed Gardens

 - Buying Topsoil –Is is better than what you have?

 - Making your own

 - Lasagna https://www.melindamyers.com/audio-video/melindas-garden-moment-audio-tips/sustainable-gardening/composting-and-raised-bed-gardening-together-in-any-space?ccm_paging_p=3

[gardening/build-great-garden-soil-with-lasagna-gardening?ccm_paging_p=10](https://www.melindamyers.com/audio-video/melindas-garden-moment-videos/sustainable-gardening/hugelkultur-hill-or-mound-gardening?ccm_paging_p=10)

Hugelkultur gardens https://www.melindamyers.com/audio-video/melindas-garden-moment-videos/sustainable-gardening/hugelkultur-hill-or-mound-gardening?ccm_paging_p=16

Improving existing Gardens

Top dressing with compost

Vertical mulching

https://www.melindamyers.com/audio-video/melindas-garden-moment-audio-tips/lawn-landscape-design/perennial-garden-renovations?ccm_paging_p=8

Fertilizing – Use Soil Test results

Consider a low nitrogen slow release like Milorganite

85% organic matter, non leaching phosphorus

Some of the soil bound Phosphorus & Potassium

Released when microorganisms release nutrients from

Milorganite pellets

Healthy Plants

“A dense cover of plants and mulch holds soil in place, keeping sediment out of lakes, streams, storm drains and roads; and reducing flooding, mudslides and dust storms”.

www.projectevergreen.org

Right Plant, right Place, Right Purpose

Hardy, tolerates soil conditions, winds and fits the space

Native Plants whenever possible and appropriate

Intercept rain before it reaches storm sewer

Deep roots create channels for rain water to enter soil

Roots and soil help filter impurities out of storm water

Include Trees –

<https://www.milorganite.com/blog/trees-shrubs/how-trees-help-manage-water-your-lawn-and-landscape>

Interception and Evapotranspiration

Promote Infiltration (leaf litter & macropores created by roots)

Slow water velocity reducing runoff

Reduce erosion

Improve water quality

Drought tolerant

Proper Watering – deep and less frequently

<https://www.milorganite.com/blog/garden-landscape/watering-dos-and-donts-lawn-and-garden>

Frequency varies with plant age (new plantings more frequent),
plant needs (moisture lover versus drought tolerant),
soil type (sandy soil more often than clay)
weather;s impact on watering frequency

Apply water directly to soil – avoid overhead irrigation
Group moisture lovers together
Spot water new plantings
Watering new plantings on a slope

Organic Mulch

Increases water absorption, Protects soil from erosion,
Improves soil as it breaks down, Conserves Water,
Suppresses weeds
Don't pile against tree trunks and shrub stems or
over crowns of perennials

Green Roofs and Walls

Consider weight of soil, water and plants
Drought tolerant and hardy plants

Rain Barrels

Why install rain barrels

Helps control local flooding, recharge groundwater, protect
waterways, keep pollutants out of waterways, reduce pressure on
storm sewers saves energy

Features

Small opening for downspout or Screen to keep out debris
Spigot low on barrel
Overflow +/- Downspout diverter
Interlocking hardware
Stand to elevate barrel for ease of use
Mosquito Dunks

How to install

Melinda's Garden Moment

<https://www.melindamyers.com/audio-video/melindas-garden-moment-videos/sustainable-gardening/installing-a-rain-barrel>
<https://www.freshcoastguardians.com/resources/green-strategies/rain-barrels-cisterns>

Disconnecting from storm sewer – get permission, cover opening
Set barrel in place, line up connectors, mark place to disconnect
Use hacksaw to cut through downspout,
attach flexible downspout elbow
Direct water into rain barrel

Beautify Rain Barrels

Hide with plantings

Rain barrel covers

Paint – clean, roughen surface, plastic friendly exterior paint

https://www.melindamyers.com/audio-video/melindas-garden-moment-videos/sustainable-gardening/water-conservation-never-looked-so-good?ccm_paging_p=10

Using the Water

Lawns, gardens, wash cars....

Edibles - <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs1218/>

Winter Care

Empty, clean with non-toxic solution, check connections, cover or overturn

Rain Gardens

Creating a Rain Garden Webinar <https://youtu.be/emo!ROlgZLI>

What: A garden designed to capture runoff from roofs and hard surfaces that occurs after a rain storm. More than a group of native plants - soil prep and garden design are also critical in the success.

Why: To counteract the effects of urban development by directing rainwater into the ground (recharging our groundwater) instead of the storm sewers. A properly designed and installed rain garden can collect 30% more runoff than a lawn.

<https://www.milorganite.com/blog/garden-landscape/benefits-rain-garden>

How-to:

Designing your Rain Garden

WI DNR Rain Gardens a Guide for Homeowners and Landscapers

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Stormwater/documents/RainGardenManual.pdf>

<https://www.freshcoastguardians.com/resources/green-strategies/rain-gardens>

Location, Location, Location

Call 811 or go online www.diggershotline.com 3 days before digging

Near (at least 10 feet away) the house for capturing only roof runoff

Away from the house, a bigger garden, collects water from lawn and roof

Do Not place over water lateral (contact municipality)

Do NOT place where water ponds - goal is to get water to drain not pond

Do NOT place over septic or under trees

Avoid steep slopes (over 10%) - you will need to dig deeper

Size

Any well-designed rain garden captures some runoff -

100 to 300 feet is easiest size to install while still having impact

Determined by distance from house, area being served & soil type

Consider several smaller (300ft) gardens rather than one huge garden

Longest side perpendicular to the slope & 2 times the short side

Depth

Level - 4 to 8 inches, depending on slope -

4% slope = 3 to 5" depth, 5 to 7% = 6 to 7", 8-12% slope = 8" depth

More clay in soil the deeper the garden

Amend planting bed (compost) - improves drainage and plant growth

Berm the side away from the water source

Directing the Water

Swales with sedges or stones

Downspouts extensions

Underground - PVC pipe directed to garden

Planting

Mass - Greater impact, eye appeal

Label - easier to find plants vs weeds when weeding in spring

Water - as needed especially important during establishment

Mulch

Maintaining your rain garden

<https://www.milorganite.com/blog/garden-landscape/how-maintain-your-rain-garden>

The Plants

Visit www.atc-growsmart.com for native plant information

Tolerate wet and dry soil

Pale Purple Coneflower

Swamp milkweed

Provide seasonal interest

Switchgrass

Equally Assertive or non aggressive

Culver's root

Support birds and pollinators

Showy Goldenrod

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Can't Miss Small Space Gardening, Midwest Lawn Guides

Minnesota & Wisconsin Getting Started Gardener's Guide

Month-by-Month Gardening in Minnesota & Wisconsin

Michigan Getting Started Gardener's Guide, Month-by-Month Gardening in Michigan

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Make your Trees and Shrubs Thrive and Food Gardens for Everyone

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