



Backyard Environmentalism Basics

Caring for the environment starts at home, right in your backyard. There are many steps the whole family can take to develop and nurture their outdoor haven. Backyard environmentalism produces enormous benefits: it can help conserve water, clear the air, benefit the lawn and attract garden wildlife.

Consider that an average lawn generates enough oxygen for a family of four by converting carbon dioxide into oxygen. The cooling effect of eight average-sized lawns can equal 70 tons of air conditioning, and grasses in the United States each year trap an estimated 12 million tons of dirt and dust in the air.

“Every family can make a real difference in improving the environment by using effective stewardship practices in their yards,” says Rich Martinez, chief environmental officer, The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company. “Understanding these practices is essential for homeowners and communities nationwide to fully experience the benefits that healthy landscapes provide.”

Here are some simple steps you can take to help the environment and enjoy the results outside your home and in the yard.

Water Use

- Use a layer of mulch around plants to reduce evaporation and retain moisture.
- Minimize evaporation by watering in the early morning when temperatures are cooler and winds are lighter.
- A mowing height of 3” allows the grass to have plenty of green leaves to foster a deep root system, which is able to better utilize moisture.
- Apply fertilizer only to the lawn for the best protection of the environment. If fertilizer lands on any hard surface, sweep the fertilizer back onto the lawn to keep it from being washed into the storm sewers.

Clear the Air

- Plant trees on your property to help remove air pollution, filter water, sequester carbon, provide homes for wildlife and keep your home in the shade. Plant on the south or west side of the house for shade.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn to help recycle plant nutrients back into the soil.



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Garden Delights

- Spread a blanket of composted bark across the surface of bare soil to prevent weeds.
- Choose easy-to-grow plants that are well-adapted or native to your region.
- Enhance your garden by choosing plants with interesting flowers, foliage and fruits.

This season, get the family outside for some fun in the dirt, while giving back to the environment.