



YardScaping – YARD YARNS

MYTH: Organic or natural products are safer than traditional products.

FACT: Any organic substance, natural or synthetic, can cause environmental problems when added in excess of what a landscape can absorb and use. What's important is knowing the properties (like toxicity and how long it will remain in the environment before breaking down) of chemicals we apply.

MYTH: When it comes to garden chemicals, adding more is better.

FACT: Doubling up weed killers can injure plants and leave long-lived residues in the soil. Over-use of insecticides may kill beneficial bugs, harm plants and make vegetables unfit to eat. Fertilizers used too heavily will burn plants, prevent seed germination and contaminate water sources.

MYTH: Garden plants do not become invasive.

FACT: Not all of our adored garden plants behave themselves. While few of us would intentionally buy an invasive plant, don't we look for plants that establish quickly, flower profusely and spread so densely they crowd out weeds? Don't purchase a potentially invasive plant unwittingly. Even plants that now have been labeled "noxious" can be purchased at nurseries, home improvement centers and online. The Cooperative Extension (1-800-287-0274) publishes a must have guide called *Gardening to Conserve Maine's Native Landscape: Plants to Use and Plants to Avoid*.

MYTH: Native plants are not readily available.

FACT: Nearly 1,500 species of native plants (also called indigenous) make up Maine's landscape. As the trend takes off, many local nurseries are stocking more and more native plants. Check out the Cooperative Extension's *Native Plants: A Maine Source List*.

MYTH: Lawns are easy care.

FACT: Lawns are the most labor intensive part of any yard. They regularly need mowing, watering and, when necessary, fertilizing. Plus, they don't filter pollutants as well as shrubs, perennials, groundcovers and trees. It's worth deciding how much lawn you really need. How do you use your lawn? Sports? Entertaining? Or simply because nothing else but grass has always been there?

MYTH: Fertilizers and pesticides are necessary to grow great looking grass.

FACT: Much fertilizer and pesticide use is unnecessary and offers little or no benefit to turf. Growing a healthy lawn by applying horticultural knowledge is the best way to prevent problems with insects and weeds.

MYTH: Bagging grass clippings is the way to go.

FACT: Clippings provide free turf food and are best left on the lawn. Besides, up to 50 percent of the solid waste in landfills is grass cuttings. A typical lawn of 10,000 square feet generates about 150 pounds of clippings per mowing.