



## YardScaping - LANDSCAPES

**Right plant, right place, right purpose.** The right plant will defend itself against pests, fit the space, do well in the amount of sunlight and water that's available, and tolerate your soil's pH.

**Planting trees? Think small.** Small diameter trees require less maintenance and become established in the landscape more quickly than larger diameter trees.

**Go native.** Try growing some native plants. They're well adapted to Maine's climate, so that means less work and more reward for you. Purchase only nursery grown natives, not ones dug from the wild. Choose a few that are food for birds, bees and other beneficial insects.

**Avoid invaders.** Stay away from invasive plants. They spread uncontrollably, choking out native vegetation, which can change forever the availability of food and shelter for wildlife. Common culprits include purple loosestrife, Japanese barberry, Oriental bittersweet, Japanese knotweed and multiflora rose. If you're harboring an invasive plant already, remove it, including all of the roots.

**Feed the needs.** Give your plants only the nutrients they need. If your plants don't talk to you, then you'll have to take a soil test for fertility and pH. Test kits are available at county Cooperative Extension and Soil & Water Conservation District offices.

**Cook up compost.** Making your own miracle material is one of the best ways to enrich your gardens. Compost adds nutrients and encourages beneficial organisms. It improves drainage and retains moisture. Throw in shredded leaves, cut-up twigs and branches, and green kitchen waste. Avoid adding diseased plants.

**Reduce runoff.** Pesticides and fertilizers used on yards can wind up polluting water bodies after a heavy rain or snowmelt. You can prevent runoff in number of ways: limit your use of these chemicals in the first place, keep them off of hard surfaces like sidewalks and driveways, reduce the number of hard surfaces you have (compacted lawns included), direct roof runoff into vegetated areas and avoid applying before rain.

**Plant buffers.** Plant trees, shrubs and groundcovers to create "buffers" (natural filters) along shorelines and downhill of stormwater runoff. Don't rake up the "duff" (nature's mulch of twigs, pine needles and leaves) in the buffer zone.

**Welcome wildlife.** Landscaping for wildlife is healthy gardening at its best. Gather critters and flitters by reducing your lawn, planting in layers (trees, shrubs and groundcovers) and aiming for a mix of species. Try plants that offer sheltering thickets or produce nectar and fruit. Add water like a birdbath (refresh daily to prevent mosquito breeding). Always have something in bloom especially early on to attract insects that will in turn attract birds. Add non-living materials like fallen logs, stonewalls and feeders.

**Know your enemy.** Ninety-eight percent of all insects are benign or beneficial. Spiders, ground beetles and lady beetles to name a few. They can help fight your pest battles for you. Learn to recognize and protect them. Maybe even buy them!

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**Think before you spray.** Identify your pest without a doubt. Realize a few pests are okay—plants can withstand some damage. Use non-chemical controls first: handpicking weeds, flushing insects with water, fighting bugs with bugs. Use pesticides only when pests increase beyond acceptable levels, then spot treat only.

**Prevent the predictable.** Avoid plants prone to pest problems. Shop for insect- and disease-resistant plants to further reduce the need for pesticides. You can get the low down on a plant's pest-off powers from plant books and catalogues, garden centers, nurseries, and your county Cooperative Extension office.

For more landscape tips, visit [www.yardscaping.org](http://www.yardscaping.org).