

FOUR Sustainable Landscaping

New England's villages are dotted with green lawns and gardens. As the region's population grows, so does the demand for water, fertilizers, and pesticides for these lawns and gardens. Landscaping techniques promoted by Extension programs in New England address these needs with an overall "sustainable landscaping" approach designed to minimize the amount of water, nutrients and pesticides used in an effort to promote water resource protection.

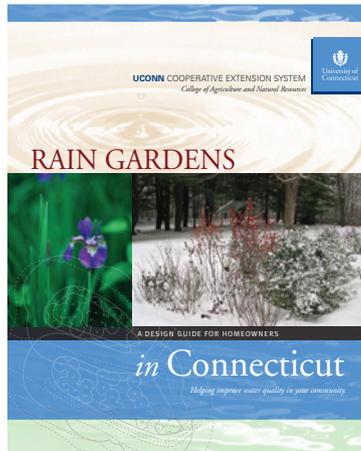
Sustainable landscaping techniques require a strong research base. For example, the University of Connecticut conducts research on rain gardens, low-input lawns and optimal amounts and timing of fertilizer and encourages residents to adopt these techniques.

PARTNERSHIPS

RESEARCHERS, FEDERAL AGENCIES, VOLUNTEER GROUPS AND STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP PROGRAMS THAT HIGHLIGHT ON-THE-GROUND EFFORTS. For example, research on rain gardens and residential turf management conducted at the University of Connecticut has been extended and incorporated into programs throughout New England via the Sustainable Landscapes and New

England NEMO focus areas.

Connecticut's rain garden research and education work was highlighted in a 2007 Sunday New York Time's article.



SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FOCUS AREA MEMBERS PARTNERED WITH THE NORTHEAST IPM CENTER AND MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL WATER PROGRAM to organize and present at the first Green-Blue Summit on residential pest management, nutrients, and water quality. People from across the Northeast attended the Summit.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HAS TRAINED MORE THAN 230 Master Gardeners in water quality and home landscaping. These volunteer ambassadors disperse this information to other community groups as part of their outreach efforts. And, the University of Rhode Island continues to support and mentor its Master Gardener Speakers

Bureau which presented seven Healthy Landscapes workshops for more than 240 people in the state.

LED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, THE FOCUS AREA WAS

AWARDED A THREE YEAR \$480,000 Integrated Research, Extension, Education grant by CSREES NIWQP to apply environmental and behavioral research results to Extension efforts to reduce the application of excess nutrients by homeowners (do-it-yourselfers) in targeted, urbanizing neighborhoods throughout New England with the ultimate goal of protecting surface and ground water quality.

THE UNIVERSITIES OF RHODE ISLAND AND CONNECTICUT PILOTED A TRAINING COURSE FOR RHODE ISLAND COASTAL REGULATORS CONCERNED WITH DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE COASTAL BUFFERS.

To follow up, the University of Rhode Island conducted two pilot training courses for more than 100 landscape professionals as part of a coastal landscape certification program.



By maintaining their landscape for clean water, people can make a difference in protecting and improving water quality. University of Rhode Island Extension and several partners developed **Healthy Landscapes**, an integrated project funded

by CSREES NIWQP, brings together the state's leading voices in water quality education, community residents and state-of-the-art research to learn how to care for their landscape while also improving and preserving water quality. Working with the New England Program, Healthy Landscapes created a water quality education program tailored to a quasi-suburban/rural town in Rhode Island. With a simple message, "clean water starts at home," the program used science-based strategies to fill a research and education void to landowners in the community. Master Gardeners, university researchers, town officials, Extension staff, and landscape professionals collaborated to ensure that the public was educated and empowered to use newly learned skills and make a difference in their own backyards. Eighty percent of the individuals who participated in Healthy Landscapes indicated a willingness to change their yard care practices to better protect water quality. And more than half have adopted at least one sustainable landscaping technique.



SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING

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ADOPTED PRACTICES

SEVERAL LAKESIDE COMMUNITIES IN VERMONT HAVE DEVELOPED BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR SMART LANDSCAPING for all new construction and two Vermont municipalities are applying sustainable landscaping awareness strategies for business property owners.

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE'S BUFFER BRIGADE INSTALLED ELEVEN BUFFERS, including one large-scale demonstration project. Landowners reported spending an average of \$225 and 20 volunteer hours each on these projects.



UNIVERSITIES OF RHODE ISLAND AND CONNECTICUT ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO DEVELOP A TURF MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL FOR USE IN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS. The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council will adopt these protocols into regulations requiring their use in coastal areas.



Lakeside landowners become better caretakers of their natural resources



Lake Education and Action Project, LEAP, is a highly successful CSREES' NIWQP partnership coordinated by Extension programs at the Universities of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Lake Champlain Sea Grant. LEAP serves the special water quality needs facing lakeside property owners throughout the region. Conservation-minded lakeside landowners in Maine sought help from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension to develop outreach programs to educate other residents about water quality protection. Post-workshop surveys found that Maine lakeside landowners, who took advantage of the Watershed Stewards Program, were becoming better caretakers of their natural resources. In a survey of these watershed stewards versus lakeside landowners who had not participated in the program, the stewards knew significantly more about the lake as an ecosystem and its potential threats. These stewards also spent more time working to protect water resources. In addition, Stewards voiced a need for additional tools that would help them educate their neighbors in similar practices.





To meet this need, University of Maine Cooperative Extension and University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension/Sea Grant joined forces to offer two outreach workshops for Watershed Stewards. Each participant left the workshop with a framework for educating the public in lake water quality issues. Ninety-six percent (25 of 26 participants) indicated that they would recommend this training to similar landowners. Two-thirds of the group planned to submit a proposal to University of Maine Cooperative Extension to obtain funding for their outreach plans. These newly empowered Watershed Stewards were now able to turn U.S. EPA and Maine Community Foundation funding into meaningful on-the-ground projects for lakeside landowners. These individuals have installed rain gardens, printed educational materials, met with town officials and have promoted the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's "LakeSmart" Program to other lakefront landowners in their area. As a result, Stewards are better able to communicate lake-related issues to their peers.



The positive response to this unique partnership spurred University of Maine Cooperative Extension to offer this workshop to all of its Watershed Stewards.