

# Changing Landscape—

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updated Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) chart to select low water use plantings that will thrive in your region. Good soil preparation and mulching also contribute to efficient water use. Soil with high organic content will retain moisture rather than repel it. Prepare and maintain soil with compost to raise organic content and condition the soil. Mulching helps retain moisture in the soil and has other benefits including weed control and soil consistency. Mulch liberally in areas of high solar exposure to keep moisture from evaporating away.

## Low Waste Generation

Landscape professionals may be less familiar with waste issues, but they are no less important. "Green" waste, much of it coming from landscape maintenance, continues to be a large part of what our communities throw away. Most everyone understand the "ethic" of recycling and participates in recycling programs in their communities. This same concern for waste reduction should also extend into the yardscape by using low-waste plantings and practices that will reduce waste generation.

First, use low waste plantings in the landscape. Select drought-tolerant slow growth plantings appropriate for the region. Also consider placement and spacing. Don't crowd landscaping where minimal growth will require pruning. Proper spacing between plants allows more natural growth, minimizing the need for excessive pruning.

Make every attempt to prune conservatively. Pruning is a large contributor of waste when performed in an excessive and haphazard fashion. Pruning should be limited to maintain controlled, but natural growth patterns. "Topping" or "shearing" where large quantities of material is removed is wasteful and unhealthy.

Using shredded green waste as a mulch is a great reuse of waste materials. Mulching provide a variety of benefits, including weed prevention, moisture retention, mud abatement and erosion control. As an added benefit, when organic mulch decomposes, it will condition the soil and add important nutrient.

Finally, an important step in reducing waste generation is to reduce turf areas. Grass lawns are a heavy contributor of waste, especially during the warmer months. By reducing turf area, maintenance, waste disposal and irrigation requirements can be significantly reduced. Removal of small, irregular shaped turf areas removes difficult mowing transitions, which results in easier maintenance. Replace grass with slow-growth, drought-tolerant ground covers for attractive landscaping with significantly lower maintenance requirements and costs.

## Marketing Resource Efficiency

Becoming a "green" (environmentally conscious) landscape professional carries more weight in the marketplace

these days than in the past. Not only are more residents and businesses aware of the importance of saving water and recycling, but many have adopted "green" practices themselves. Landscape professionals can use this new awareness to position themselves as an environmentally friendly service. Begin to cultivate an "attitude" within your company that resource efficient landscaping is "good for business" environmentally, economically and competitively. Begin to integrate some or all of the practices discussed here into company practices. You will find that new and existing customers will respond positively to practices that help the environment and make economic sense.

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(Editor's Note: For additional information on Resource Efficient landscapes, contact the Landscape Management Outreach Partnership (LMOP) at (925) 906-1801.)

## Penn State Agronomy Department Changes Name For Sake of Clarity

The agronomy department at Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences has changed its name. Beginning this month, it will be known as the department of crop and soil sciences.

The name was changed after extensive consultation with faculty, alumni and agricultural industry professionals, according to A.J. Turgeon, professor of turfgrass management and interim department head.

"We made the change for the sake of clarity," Turgeon said. "Agronomy has always been about crop production and soil resources, but it's an older term that a lot of people aren't familiar with. Many other departments have changed their names for the same reason.

"Our research and extension activities in production agriculture, environmental stewardship and land use policy won't change. Our faculty have actively researched and trained graduate students in these areas for years. But acknowledging soil science in the department name should enhance our ability to attract the best students."