

# CLEAN BUSINESS IN A WATERSHED



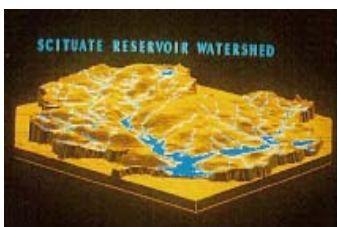
## The Scituate Reservoir Watershed Education Program

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### Passing On Clean Water

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Conservation District  
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Greenville, RI 02828  
(phone) 401-949-1480  
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Providence, RI 02908  
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Above is a 3-D image of the Scituate Reservoir Watershed.

Portions of Foster, Glocester, Johnston and Scituate comprise this land area.

The Scituate Reservoir, lying in the lowest part of this land area, catches all water flowing over this watershed.

The Scituate Reservoir is a major source of drinking water in Rhode Island.

#### Contents:

March Issue, *Volume 12*: What is healthy landscaping? Why is eco-friendly landscaping profitable?

July Issue, *Volume 13*:

This Issue, *Volume 14*:

## The cost of green lawns

With spring come the joys of landscaping your business' property; either by yourself or with the help of a professional landscaping company. The chosen landscape architecture (the plants and overall design) determines how much time and money you will spend over the next several months. According to the American Nursery and Landscape Association, in 2002 an average of \$1,170 per household was spent on landscaping. [[www.anla.org/pdffiles/LAWNlandscape1997\\_2002.prn.pdf](http://www.anla.org/pdffiles/LAWNlandscape1997_2002.prn.pdf)]. That number equates to a total of \$28.9 billion spent throughout the US. The expenditure per property was estimated to increase annually by 8% after 2002.

How much will you spend this year on landscaping? Working with nature, not against it, will decrease your expenditures and allow a beautiful, healthy lawn to flourish. ***You can SAVE money by focusing on healthy landscaping techniques.***

### *Watering Costs cut in half*

Fact: Healthy soils with thriving micro-organisms lead to deep-rooted grass. Deep roots require less watering, less fertilizing, and save you money.

### *A great lawn can mean lower maintenance*

Fact: Native plants, hardy flowers, ground covers, trees and shrubs require lower maintenance (i.e. less chemical inputs like fertilizers and pesticides) than randomly chosen grass species.

### *Suggested Spring Lawn Maintenance Schedule*

#### *March & April*

- ◆ Sharpen mower blades.
- ◆ Raise mower blades to 3 inches.
- ◆ Test your soil (contact UMass Soil Testing Lab, ph. 413-545-2311)
- ◆ Add soil amendments based on soil test results.
- ◆ Reseed bare patches, or apply corn gluten to prevent weed germination.
- ◆ Always leave clippings on lawn to fertilize

#### *May & June*

- ◆ Check for weeds; pull out by hand.
- ◆ Reseed bare spots.
- ◆ Monitor for insect pests.
- ◆ If you have grub damage, spot treat with milky sport and/or beneficial nematodes.

(Information taken from the Massachusetts Pesticide Awareness Collaborative's brochure, *Healthy Lawns and Landscapes*)

## ***What landscaping practices cost you the most money?***

Lawn maintenance and chemical applications of fertilizers and pesticides cost a lot of money. There are high costs associated with the irrigation of your lawn and flower gardens. It costs money to keep your grass green and mowed. Understanding the costs of materials and inputs--both economically and environmentally--will enable you to save money and time.

Lawn grass, for example, can require a lot of inputs and maintenance compared to other plants such as certain groundcovers, shrubs and trees.

## ***How can I create a healthy landscape on my property?***

Simple and natural ideas will create attractive and healthy landscapes.

*Xeriscaping* is a technique that considers the natural landscape when designing lawns and gardens. By taking into account the natural conditions of your property and using native plants, you will reduce your water usage, reduce soil erosion, lower maintenance costs and preserve natural resources. You will be able to lower landscaping costs while creating an inviting atmosphere for your customers.

Below are a few basic strategies for establishing a healthy landscape on your property. These ideas can be discussed and managed with your lawn service company.



Universal symbol for  
Xeriscaping

## **Basic Strategies for creating a Healthy Landscape**

<http://www.uri.edu/ce/healthylandscapes/tips/basics.html>

- 1 choose the right plant for the right spot
- 2 recycle your yard waste
- 3 use fertilizers and pesticides responsibly
- 4 water wisely
- 5 reduce runoff from your yard and increase groundwater recharge
- 6 reduce soil erosion. keep it planted and mulched
- 7 pick up after your pets
- 8 use and dispose of fuels and hazardous products properly

**NRICD offers a variety of native seedling through the annual Seedling Sale. Please call the District Office or visit our website to view this year's selection.**

## **■ *Choosing the right plant for the right spot***

Various factors affect the growth and viability of plants: amount of sun or shade needed versus received; soil conditions; exposure to wind, salt or traffic; and land features like slopes, wet or dry spots, depressions, and stones, boulders or ledge. Plants prefer or tolerate a certain set of conditions over others. When plants are forced to grow in areas that are not as suitable, they become stressed, fail to thrive and become more susceptible to disease and pests (<http://www.uri.edu/ce/healthylandscapes/tips/1.html>). Often, to counteract a struggling lawn or flower garden, we increase the inputs of fertilizer, pesticides and/or irrigation; ultimately increasing expenditures and decreasing the cost-effectiveness of landscaping for our business.

A basic plan of attack this spring could be to take inventory of your property: watch the movement of the sun in areas where you normally have flower beds or gardens. Get your soil tested. The University of Massachusetts provides soil testing for our local area (<http://www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest/>). The primary goal of a soil test is to provide test results and recommendations that lead to the wise and economical use of soils and soil amendments like lime or fertilizer. With the above information, you'll be able to better understand your soil and the cycles of sunlight. You'll then be able to choose native plants and shrubs that should thrive, create a beautiful landscape, and save you time & money throughout the growing season.