

By Sara Ann Swida
Columnist

Greenscape your yard for fall Keep Liberty Beautiful

I have mentioned before that ‘greenscaping’ is the way to go if you care about the environment, want to have a great-looking yard, and want to save time and money too. I love a beautiful landscape, but I am really not crazy about spending all my free time working in the yard. I would rather spend more time enjoying it. One of the real pluses about greenscaping is that it is not only great for the environment, it also reduces your yard work. By planning well, greenscaping puts nature to work for you in your yard. Just a reminder: here are the five steps for entering the world of greenscaping:

- Build and maintain healthy soil.
- Plant right for your site.
- Practice smart watering.
- Adapt a holistic approach to pest management.
- Practice natural lawn care.

There are excellent resources on the Web (like www.epa.gov/GreenScapes) for more information on greenscaping and green landscaping. The local Extension Office is also an excellent resource for all things gardening. There are also a host of books and even television shows on the Home and Garden Channel that have loads of suggestions and ideas that you can put in to practice in your yard. Some of my favorite resources include just about any book by Georgia’s own Walter Reeves (he is my sensible gardening hero because I am an HGTV junkie, after all) and also the Garden Guide to the Lower South by the Trustees’ Garden Club in Savannah. If you are looking for solid, practical advice, I really recommend Walter’s books or the Trustees’ garden guide. But back to greenscaping. Here are some suggestions for seasonal planning for fall from the GreenScapes Guide from the Environmental Protection Agency.

For flower and vegetable gardens”

1. Pull emerging weeds in beds when ground is moist and before they develop deep roots.
2. Mulch garden beds with leaves or compost to reduce winter weeds and to feed the soil.
3. Prepare new planting areas by digging in compost.

Tree and shrub beds

1. Mulch tree and shrub beds with leaves, shredded wood or bark.
2. Plant trees, shrubs, and many types of perennials in early fall to give them a good start.

Lawns

1. Improve thin areas of lawn in September-October by aerating, overseeding, and top-dressing with compost.

2. Fertilize lawns with natural organic or slow-release fertilizer in September to develop healthy roots and crowd out weeds.
3. Plant new lawns to give them the best start before next summer.

Watering

1. Reduce watering during cooler weather. Yes, it really will start getting cooler eventually.
2. Put away exposed soaker hoses or cover them with mulch if they will be left out over winter.

One more thing: Consider clearing old garden growth and compost so it will be ready to use in the spring. So as fall arrives, think about letting nature do some of your yardwork. After all, you need that extra time for Georgia football games!

Current Keep Liberty Beautiful projects that need your involvement:

- Oct. 25: Rivers Alive in Liberty County. Mark the date on your calendar now to help with this annual event.
- Coming soon: Coastal Living Holiday House, loaded with holiday ideas and ideas for living green, too. More information available soon.
- Liberty County: Home of the world's largest crayon. Please help us make this Guinness Book of World Records project a reality by calling 368-4888 or e-mailing biglibertycrayon@yahoo.com. We have more than 700 pounds of crayons now, but we need even more to create this giant crayon this fall!

For more information on Keep Liberty County Beautiful programs, contact Sara Ann Swida at 368-4888 or klcb@libertycountygga.com.

<http://www.coastalcourier.com/news/article/8408>