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Home

About Us

Strategies

Members

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A public/private initiative to voluntarily
improve air quality in the Chicago
metropolitan region

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REDUCES EMISSIONS.

you are here: [Home](#) > [Strategies](#) > [Natural Landscaping](#)

MORE NATURAL LANDSCAPING

- [Product Information](#)
- [How To](#)
- [Case Studies](#)
- [Technical Information](#)
- [Model Ordinances](#)
- [Resources/Vendors](#)
- [Software & Reporting Tool](#)
- [Raising Awareness of Natural Landscaping Report](#)

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- » [All Strategies](#)
- » [Business Related](#)
- » [Community Related](#)

Natural Landscaping

What Is Natural Landscaping?

Natural landscaping uses native plants, wildflowers and grasses to landscape around large commercial properties and residential developments instead of planting traditional turf grass. Because natural landscaping is adapted to the Midwestern geography, hydrology and climate, it requires fewer pesticides, fertilizers and watering to maintain. It costs less to install than traditional landscaping and, after the initial few years, reduces maintenance costs, combats erosion, and accommodates storm and flood waters better. It is also a natural deterrent to lingering geese.

How Can This Improve Air Quality?

Native plants require no mowing, weeding or core aeration and significantly less water, fertilizer or pesticides. According to the Northern Illinois Planning Commission, 90% of the costs of conventional landscaping can be avoided by switching to natural landscaping. Additionally, the reduction in use of diesel engine-powered mowers and other maintenance equipment help reduce emissions of smog, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide. Lawn mowers are estimated to emit about 60 tons each of VOCs into the air. Plus, a gasoline-powered lawn mower pollutes as much in one hour as does driving an automobile for 350 miles!

Who Should Participate?

Anyone who is responsible for selecting, installing and maintaining landscaping for commercial properties or large residential developments can implement natural landscaping as a long-term solution that lowers maintenance costs and emissions of air pollutants by joining Clean Air Counts!

Where Can I Get More Information?

For more information about Natural Landscaping for your business, visit the [Corporatelands Program](#) or contact Shirlee Hoffman at shoffman@openlands.org, 312-863-6257.

Why Should You Use Natural Landscaping?

Benefits of participating in natural landscaping include:

- Reduced emissions of smog, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide from

diesel engine-powered mowers and other maintenance equipment.

- Fewer ozone alert days in the summertime.
- Improved regional air quality.
- Reduced maintenance effort, such as mowing, weeding and aerating for lower maintenance costs.
- Lower use of pesticides, fertilizers and watering to maintain the landscaping.
- Prevention of land erosion.
- Better accommodation of storm and flood waters.
- Significant reductions in planting and maintenance costs.
- Doesn't attract lingering geese.
- Less likelihood of a more restrictive regulatory environment for the region in the future.

Clean Air Counts is a voluntary, public-private initiative to reduce smog-forming pollutants and energy consumption in the greater Chicago, six-county region. It is a collaborative effort between the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, the Illinois Environmental Agency, US Environmental Protection Agency – Region 5 and the Delta Institute.

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