

All the Dirt

A periodical for friends and clients of Landscape Associates - Midsummer issue

Lawn artistry

A plain swath of green grass is nice, but... have you ever wanted something a little more interesting? Here are some ways to liven up a ho-hum lawn.

Create patterns with pavers

Break up a straight expanse of grass with a creative arrangement of patio pavers. Made of different colors and materials, these can provide visual punch and a good walking surface for highly trafficked areas. A professional installation will ensure a level surface so the lawn mower can roll smoothly across grass and the interspersed pavers.

Another twist on this idea is grassy pavers, which are concrete blocks that have an open pattern, allowing grass to grow up through the open spaces. You can actually use these in parking areas, giving a green and textured look to otherwise strictly hard surfaces. (These can also help reduce runoff problems.)

Establish a focal point

A small fountain, a large boulder, a bench, or a piece of sculpture all add dimension and draw the eye in otherwise



monotonous stretch of grass. These can also set a tone for your yard – formal, casual, Oriental... This is your chance to highlight a treasured piece of outdoor art or a beautiful rock specimen.

Mix your media

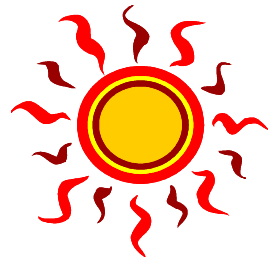
Highlight areas of grass by contrasting them with other plant or hardscape materials. Cut out a curved bed that features colored flowers or shrubs. Set off a patch of grass with a border of pebbles. Wind a path of grass through a planted area.

Need more inspiration? Call or browse our web site.

Summer lawn survival tips

Follow these tips for a healthy lawn through July and August, courtesy of the UW-Extension:

- Water lawns as needed. If you do not water, lawns will naturally go dormant.
- Early in July, fertilize high maintenance lawns (those that are watered all summer). Do not fertilize if you leave clippings on your lawn when you mow.
- Apply a grub control product to your lawn if there is a history of grub problems and/or your lawn is a high maintenance lawn.
- Avoid seeding, fertilizing, and spraying for weeds in July.
- Watch for insect pests, diseases and other lawn problems.
- Establish a new lawn or renovate your current lawn, starting mid-August to mid-September. That's the best time to establish a lawn in Wisconsin.



A final piece of advice: Let grass grow to 3" in height before mowing; taller blades have deeper roots and provide more shade for soil – this also helps stunt weed growth.

Landscape Associates offers a full range of landscaping services throughout northeast Wisconsin.

We design, install, and maintain your outdoor living space or business environment.

Visit us on the web at www.landscape-associates.com or call (920) 337-4915.

Rain Gardens

You've probably heard a lot about rain gardens lately, and for good reason. They provide a way for home and business owners to help reduce polluted runoff – a big problem for lakes and streams in or near our communities.

How do they work? Water draining off the roofs of buildings is captured in a garden that features native plantings, and the water has a chance to slowly filter into the ground rather than run off into the storm sewer.

The rain garden fills with a few inches of water after a storm and, compared with a conventional lawn, allows about 30% more water to soak into the ground.

An individual rain garden may seem like no big deal, but collectively they produce substantial neighborhood and community environmental benefits.

Consider these advantages:

- 1) By increasing the amount of water that filters into the ground, rain gardens recharge local and regional aquifers.
- 2) They help protect communities from flooding and drainage problems.
- 3) They help protect streams and lakes from pollutants carried by urban stormwater – lawn fertilizers and pesticides, oil and other fluids that leak from cars, and other harmful substances that wash off roofs and paved areas.
- 4) They enhance the beauty of yards and neighborhoods.
- 5) They provide valuable habitat for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects.

A rain garden is not a pond. The water they hold soaks in, so they are dry between rainfalls. Another common concern is that they may provide a breeding ground for mosquitoes, but that is actually a greater problem in bird baths,

storm sewers and lawns. Standing water in a rain garden usually remains only a few hours – mosquitoes need 7 to 12 days to lay and hatch eggs. Also, rain gardens attract dragonflies, which eat mosquitoes.

If you're still not convinced, be assured that a rain garden is not very expensive to establish and is relatively simple to maintain.

We can incorporate a rain garden in your landscaping or, if you want to try it on your own, the Wisconsin DNR has a helpful website.