

## Sustainable Landscape Practices

Landscaping can make a huge difference in how anyone enjoys the world around them. It can be a well kept vegetable garden, a pleasant group of container plants, a pleasing rhythm from tree placement around a house, a flower bed that is visible from a window, or a native area that welcomes wildlife. What makes it even better is the sustainability of it. That means it requires little care from humans to look so pleasing. It contains plants that grow in the area with only minor help from watering, fertilizing, and pruning. The less the soil gets disturbed, the better. Use compost and organic soil amendments instead of commercial fertilizers. Use rain water instead of treated water or well water if you need to water. Of course, you need to start off with a plan, but it helps to know these sorts of practices before you select plants or trees or even a location for a vegetable garden. Which direction will the plants get sun from? What about north wind or the slope of the land? Have you gotten your soil tested? It really helps when choosing plants and amending the soil to know the type of soil that is present. Read the plant labels. Spend time considering the needs of each plant so money won't be wasted planting something that won't do well. Taking care to use correct planting practices will reward the next generation after you, not just your own. The Agrilife Extension teaches something called Earthkind Practices and it encompasses all of this. Just think of being kind to the earth. If we all use multiple insecticides and fungicides without knowing if it will help or if it is even necessary, that would not qualify as being kind to our planet. Gardening includes learning about our world around us. That includes being a good steward of it. In the next few months, the master gardeners will be writing about ways to have a sustainable landscape, so pull out your seed and plant catalogues and start being observant of how your own landscape can be a sustainable one. And the Extension Office has kits for soil testing. 940-659-1228