



## Tips on Yard Care

**How you care for the land surrounding your property impacts the well-being of Bronxville's ecosystem. Learn the best practices for maintaining a healthy yard for your family, your community, and the living organisms that share your corner of the earth.**

\*Have you had the talk with your landscaper about your desire to adopt healthier practices for your yard? If necessary, consider switching to a landscaper that uses organic fertilizers and pesticides, and seeks to adopt environmentally sound practices.

\*Take steps to restore the health of your soil; without healthy soil you can't grow healthy plants and trees, beautiful flowers, or nutritious vegetables.

\*Ask your landscaper to let the grass grow longer between cuttings, and leave clippings where they fall. They will soon disappear into the landscape, returning vital nutrients to the soil.

\*Rake rather than blow leaves, or mulch them and leave them on the lawn (<http://www.leleny.org/>). Consider piling leaves around scrubs for the winter to provide insulation against the cold and habitat for birds.

\*Consider planting more of your property, especially existing lawn, with shrubs, bushes, ornamental grass, and trees, to provide shade and animal habitat, absorb rain water, and add diversity to your landscape.

\*When choosing what to plant, consider all the variables: native species versus exotics; species that are climate resistant for our area; how much room the mature specimens will require and what might be in their way (such as power lines).

\*Trees provide numerous benefits and their ability to reduce surface temperature will become even more important as climate change brings more very hot days; consider your role in helping to maintain Bronxville's lovely tree canopy. (Under Articles of Local Interest, see articles on Bronxville's trees.)

\*As we continue to build more non-porous surfaces in Bronxville, run-off into storm drains increases in volume and becomes more toxic, impacting the water quality of the Bronx River where it all ends up. You can help by including rain barrels in your landscaping: barrels catch rain water off roofs and other surfaces and redirect it to garden plantings, thereby reducing the volume of water flowing into the

storm drains and allowing the water to be purified naturally as it filters through plants and soil. Increasing the plantings around your home, especially replacing grass with plants that absorb more water, is also beneficial. And rain barrels conserve water that can be released during dry periods.

\*In the summer, avoid overwatering your landscape. Make sure automatic sprinklers don't activate when the ground is already saturated from rain. Studies suggest that you may need to water less often than you think.

\*Consider eliminating emissions from lawn care machines such as leaf blowers, lawn mowers and hedge trimmers by choosing electric models.

\*Resources:

Planet Natural Research Center: [planetnatural.com/organic-lawn-care-101/](https://planetnatural.com/organic-lawn-care-101/)

New York Botanical Garden: [nybg.org/about/sustainability/](https://nybg.org/about/sustainability/)

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