

Conservation Corner

Summer is quickly coming to an end. Soon it will be time to take advantage of the cooler weather and work on landscaping for the upcoming season. The Town of La Plata has been encouraging its residents to reduce the amount of potable water used for landscaping, and to use greener landscaping techniques to reduce water consumption, have healthier landscapes, and be good stewards of the environment. Here are some steps you can take this fall to get your landscaping better prepared for next year.

* **Compost** - In the fall, trimming, weeding, and raking can generate a lot of organic material. By composting, natural processes will biodegrade that material and turn it into valuable mulch you can reuse on your property.

* **Reduce** the Turf-Turf grasses consume more water than trees, shrubs, and other plants. By expanding your garden areas, installing a new rain garden, and planting native plants, you can reduce the amount of water your landscape needs.

* Only add plants and trees that have low water use and **native varieties** to reduce water needs in the new garden areas you have added.

* **Dethatch** to remove accumulated matted organic material from your grass.

* Aerate your grass to reduce the compaction of your soil and help precipitation get deeper into the ground with less runoff

* Reseed and overseed with drought resistant and native grass seed varieties.

* Add **Bird Houses**, and **Bat Houses** to attract insect-eating birds and bats to your property as natural bug control.

* Use a **mulching mower** on your grass, and mulch in fallen leaves to return organic material to your lawn and reduce fertilizing needs.

* **Mulch Plants** - It adds organic material to soil, helps retain moisture, and keeps roots cool during warm months.

Fall is a great time to help create a healthy lawn that will not require large amounts of fertilizers or irrigation. Keeping organic material on your property; using appropriate plants and seed varieties, and proper lawn care result in a beautiful property that is good for the environment as well.

Would you like to assist the Town in developing *new green policies and legislation*? The Town is forming a Green Building Committee to make recommendations to the Town Council. If you have experience in the environment, green construction, conservation, or similar interest, your expertise is needed, and you are encouraged to fill out the Town's personal history/application form and send it along with a letter of interest to the Town Clerk. A printable version of the form is on the Town's web page at www.townofiplata.org, or you can call the Town Hall to have one sent to you, or stop by and pick one up.

