



*Home  
and  
Garden Show  
2006*

***Max Jones Fieldhouse  
Goodland, Kan.***

***Saturday, April 29, 10 am – 5 p.m.***

***Sunday, April 30, Noon – 4 p.m.***

**The  
Goodland Star-News**

1205 Main Goodland, KS

(785) 899-2338

# 'Green lawn' good for the environment

Do green lawns equate to status? Many people seem to think so. That's why weekend warriors will do whatever's necessary to make sure their lawns are cut, manicured and without a weed in sight. Look out dandelions — you don't have a chance.

However, in their quests to achieve rolling hills of green, homeowners may participate in some lawn-care techniques that are not so "green" or, in other words, healthy for the environment. This includes an abundant use of pesticides and powered lawn equipment.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Americans apply 70 million pounds of pesticides yearly to home lawns, trees and shrubs, roughly 10 times more per acre than is used on farms. These pesticides can ultimately trickle down into fresh-water supplies and impact the habitats of animals, insects and other creatures. In addition, homeowners ride around on power mowers and push gas-guzzling

equipment that has the potential to pollute the air. Plus, watering the lawn, trees and shrubbery can put a drain on the water supply if done improperly.

Rest assured you don't need to give up your gardening hobby or quest to have the best lawn on the street. There are ways to enjoy a beautiful and healthy lawn and landscape without having a negative impact on the neighborhood and other surroundings. Here are some ideas.

## Organic feeding

Rather than purchasing chemical-based foods and fertilizers, look to all-natural sources. A compost heap can generate important nutrients for your lawn and plants and can be created simply from lawn clippings, raked leaves and the uneaten scraps from your kitchen — like fruit rinds, eggshells and left-over coffee grounds.

## Watch watering

Rather than dousing your landscape with

water and risking wasting more than is necessary, consider underground irrigation systems or hoses that are specially designed to water lawns and plants at the root level. Some systems operate on a timer and water in the early morning or early evening hours when the water will have maximum potential to benefit the lawn. Otherwise, you could be watering for naught — with the powerful rays of the sun evaporating the water, or worse, reflecting off of water drops and puddles and scorching your lawn.

## Limit pesticide use

Or even better, look for products that boast organic properties or safe-for-the-environment disclaimers. Don't overlook the benefits of insects and animals that can actually be of assistance. Butterflies, worms, birds and even some beetles can consume harmful "bugs" like aphids, mites and other leaf eaters. Even bats are good to have around, as these evening hunters eat thousands of biting flies, gnats and mos-

quitoes, pests that can make outdoor entertaining a nightmare.

Choose the right seed mix — Consult with your local nursery or garden center for the types of grass seed best suited for your region. Also, learn how to enrich the soil for optimal growth. A lawn that has a better chance of surviving and flourishing naturally, without the need for an abundance of fertilizers or weed killers, will be environmentally sound.

## The proper cut

Cutting your grass too short leaves it susceptible to disease, insects and drought. That is why it's important to cut it to the right height. Your local nursery can advise you on this, or consult the bag of grass seed for more advice. If your lawn is too long, cut it in two stages to get it to the proper height so you won't risk shocking the lawn.

With simple techniques, you can ensure your lawn is beautiful and environmentally friendly.

# Mulch can add beauty, benefits to landscaping

Whether you're a full-time gardener or just a weekend warrior when it comes to tending to your lawn, making your landscape more aesthetically appealing is the goal of many a green thumb.

A well-manicured lawn and the right choice of plants, flowers and shrubs are ways to achieve that goal, as is laying down mulch, something that can be both a beautiful and healthy addition to your landscape.

As beautiful as mulch can be, it won't work properly or maintain its aesthetic appeal if not laid down properly. But before examining the best way to lay down mulch, here are a few reasons why you should do it.

## Benefits of mulch

- **Moisture.** A properly done mulching job will conserve a great deal of soil moisture by reducing evaporation, which prevents erosion and injury to your plants that result from drought. Also, for the gardener looking to spend as little time as possible watering his plants, the conserved moisture resulting from the mulch will lessen the amount of time you'll spend doing that.

- **Health.** Organic mulch will add nutrients to the soil, helping your plants better maintain their health.

- **Weed reduction.** Mulch goes a long way toward combating weeds, as weed seeds that blow onto bare ground typically grow very quickly. Those that blow onto mulch, however, are far less likely to sprout. Also, the weeds that do sprout even in the presence of mulch are far

easier to pull out than those that grow from bare ground.

- **Temperature.** Mulch helps maintain a cooler soil temperature, benefiting root growth, which helps the roots stay stronger in winter as well.

- **Mower protection.** Plants surrounded by grass instead of mulch are more susceptible to mower damage when it comes time to cut your grass.

## Applying mulch

Before putting down any mulch, you'll first want to do your planting. No plants will stand a chance if you plant them in mulch; they need to be planted in soil. To ensure you've planted your plants or flowers correctly, give them a good tug on the lower stem. If they come out of the soil easily, you haven't planted them deeply or tightly enough.

Once you've tested your plants and ensured they're firmly in the soil, you can begin to lay down your mulch. Generally, two to four inches of mulch is how much you'll want to apply. Each season, if you're not planting annuals, reapply more mulch on top of what's left from last season, until the height is between two to four inches again.

Though it's easy to apply too much mulch, you'll want to avoid this as best as you can. Overdoing it with your mulch is bad for your plants, possibly causing root rot thanks to an excess of moisture and not enough aeration.

Also, avoid mulching close to your house. Any mulch laid down within a foot of your house could

promote termites or other insect infestation.

Also take note of the soil type that will be lying beneath the mulch. Some areas of your landscape might have drainage issues with re-

spect to the soil. Such areas should not be mulched, as the water retention properties of mulch will only make this drainage problem more of a headache.

Fertilizers provide nutrients necessary for plant health and growth, such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. These are what N, P, and K stand for on bags of fertilizer. Nitrogen (N) is needed for healthy green growth and regulation of other nutrients. Phosphorus (P) helps proper roots and seeds develop and

resist disease. Potassium (K) is also important in root development and disease resistance. When properly applied, the nutrients in fertilizers are absorbed by plants and little of these nutrients enters ground or surface water resources.

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# Create a 'stress-free zone' in your yard

Stress. It's all around us from the workplace to the world at large. This season, decrease your stress levels by creating a "stress-free zone" or in your own backyard.

Don't worry about not having a spacious backyard. No matter your space limitations, your stress-free zone can incorporate the sensation of island breezes gently rocking you while your stress seems to just slip away. It all can be created when your plans begin with a hammock.

**Step 1:** Find the perfect hammock for your zone — Due to the large variety of hammock styles, creating your stress-free zone can be colorful as well as comfortable. Three general areas will need to be considered before buying a hammock: construction quality, general styling and accessories, and care. Construction is the most important factor because there are safety issues involved.

Don't stress. Laurie Rudd, creative director for Hatteras Hammocks said, "Items to look for in a body-hugging rope hammock are weight and amount of rope in the bed. The more rope, the stronger and the more comfortable the hammock will be." Heavy-duty steel end hardware also should accompany your hammock for hanging safely.

Most hammocks are made for two-person lounging with a weight capacity in excess of 400 lbs. In hanging the hammock, make sure the structure from which you are hanging the hammock will hold the weight you plan to place in the hammock. Most hammocks will come with hooks for hanging from a tree or post, while a large variety of stands are available for those who do not have those two perfectly positioned trees.

**Step 2:** Hammock accessories to increase enjoyment and reduce stress — Are you stress-

ing because you do not have two perfectly placed trees? Stress no more. Your stress-free zone can be located on your porch or next to a favorite flowering bush. This is done with the addition of a hammock stand.

With the ability to be placed on any flat surface, a hammock stand opens up all kinds of opportunities for your zone to move it anywhere that feels right. The most popular and safest stand available is made of steel and easily assembles without the need for any tools. A weight capacity of from 450 to 600 pounds is available on most hammock stands.

The next most popular accessory is the hammock pillow. Weather-resistant fabrics are used to craft large, beautiful hammock pillows that accommodate two-person relaxing. Add to those stress-relieving features any or all of the following and you will soon be "zoning!" Accessories for your hammock zone can include wheel kits, canopies, rocking kits, drink holders, storage bags, or portable tree straps.

**Step 3:** Stress-less hammock care — Once your hammock in your stress-free zone is in use, maintaining it for years to come does not have to be stressful either. Quality hammocks are built for long life in the outdoors and easy clean up when they encounter the elements. The latest technology in outdoor performance ropes and fabrics for hammocks, swings and rugs, offers stain resistance, fade resistance and easy cleaning. A mild soap solution removes most outdoor dirt. A bleach-and-water solution also can be used for tougher spots.

**Step 4:** De-stress — Everyone, after a day at the office or a day in the yard, deserves the comfort and beauty that his surroundings can provide. In no time, you'll feel your cares escaping with each soothing sway of your hammock when you create your own stress-free zone.



An outdoor Stress-Free Zone is created using a hammock from Hatteras Hammocks.

## Rule of Thumb for water use on Lawns and Gardens

One deep watering is much better than watering several times lightly. Lawns need about one inch of water each week. If the weather is very hot, apply in inch of water about every three days. Watering to a depth of 4-6 inches encourages deeper, healthier

root development. It allows longer periods between watering. To measure the water, put an empty tuna can (or cat food can) on the lawn while watering. Stop watering when the can is full or if you notice water running off the lawn.



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## Garden Seminars

**Presented by:**



April 29 – Max Jones Fieldhouse

- 10:30 Annuals by Dr. Allen Stevens**  
Presented by Rodney Zimmerman
- 11:30 Perennials by Dr. Allen Stevens**  
Presented Rodney Zimmerman
- 12:30 Recommend Tree Species for NW Kansas**  
Presented by Jim Strine – K-State Forestry Service
- 1:30 Building a Butterfly Garden**  
Presented by Sharon Steele – Thomas City Master Gardener
- 2:30 Building a Container Garden**  
Presented by Bill Rawlings – William Floral, Burlington, CO

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