

Your Yard

Gardens Growing As Green Alternatives To Lawns

(NAPSA)—You don't always need a lush lawn to make the neighbors green with envy. Sometimes, you don't need much lawn at all.

Gardens for homegrown food have been an important part of American homes from the early pioneers to World War II Victory gardens. Now, however, a recent survey has found that food gardens have re-emerged as a new technique to increase the sustainability of a home. Nearly one in five residential landscape architects is replacing part or all of traditional grass lawns with vegetable gardens, according to a survey by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA).

"Not only do you benefit from fresh produce, but these gardens offer lower maintenance time and utility costs compared to turf-grass while substantially increasing the sustainability of a home," said ASLA President Gary Scott, FASLA. "Plus, there's nothing more convenient or sustainable than homegrown food."

Food gardens can be easy, rewarding and sustainable. For starters, don't spend a dime on mulch when you can use leftover leaves. Additionally, grass clippings from other parts of your yard make an excellent weed suppressant.

Many classic vegetables such as tomatoes require starting from



Photo by Chipper Hatter

Using food-producing plants—like these peach trees—can offer a money-saving alternative to traditional grass lawns.

seeds, but perennial plants offer a lower-maintenance alternative and come back every year. Some great examples include asparagus—especially the purple passion variety, with 20 percent more sugar than regular varieties—as well as blueberry bushes, blackberries and rhubarb.

Herbs can make for an especially sustainable food garden, as many prefer hot and dry areas of the yard, with chives, sage and tarragon returning every year. A great idea is to explore the many varieties of mint such as chocolate, marshmallow and fruit salad, which carry flavors that match their names.

Food gardens are one of many ways by which landscape architects can create a more sustainable, low-maintenance alternative to expensive grass lawns for homeowners.

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