

# Simple Landscaping Tips To Reduce Your Energy Costs And Protect Your Home

(NAPSA)—Everyone wants a yard that looks as if it could appear in a magazine. But many plants, from the massive oak to the dry prairie grasses, could be as dangerous as they are beautiful. With a little planning, however, your landscape can work for you, providing curb appeal, energy efficiency and safety.

First, to help cut down on your energy bill during the warmer months, plant deciduous trees—those that lose their leaves during the winter—in the southeast and southwest areas of your property. These trees will cast a shadow during the morning and afternoon and can block 80 percent of the radiant heat from the sun, seriously cutting the heat a house absorbs, as well as cutting your cooling bill. “Just remember before planting shading trees, homeowners need to consider their mature size in relation to their distance from the house to avoid damage during a storm,” advises Tim Bowen, director of homeowner’s claims, MetLife Auto & Home.

To help during the colder months, especially in the Northern states, plant a windbreak of evergreen trees on the north and northwest side of your house to save up to 25 percent on your energy costs. The windbreak should be planted twice as far from the house as the height of the tallest tree at its maturity. “During the winter, the cold air can seep into your home, but a windbreak can deflect the

## Plant And Protect

- Plant leafy trees south of your home to shade it during the summer months.
- Plant evergreens north of your home to deflect the wind during the winter months.
- Landscape with native plants to conserve water and protect your home from a wildfire.



wind over your house and diminish the effect of the windchill, saving you money on your heating bill,” adds Bowen.

Finally, when designing your landscape, use native plants for best results, especially in drier climates. “For example, research shows that native plants often need less water and easily acclimate—preserving the environment and your wallet,” says Bowen. These plants can even provide extra protection in areas prone to wildfire, such as the Southwest, where native plants are last to catch fire and can actually slow down flames.

By following these easy landscaping tips, you can enhance the beauty of your yard, conserve resources and save on energy costs, all while protecting your home.

For more tips on landscaping to protect your home and reduce your energy bills, please visit [www.MetLifeYourLife.com](http://www.MetLifeYourLife.com) to see the Summer 2008 issue of MetLife, Your Life!.