

Eco-Scorecard

In 2004, NGA conducted its first Environmental Lawn and Garden Survey to find out just how environmentally friendly the lawn and garden practices of consumers really are. Answer the questions below to see how you compare to other yard and garden owners:

DO YOU . . .

1. Keep your yard safe, clean, and well maintained? Yes No
2. Water your lawn and plants only when they need it? Yes No
3. Read and follow pesticide and fertilizer labels carefully? Yes No
4. Leave grass clippings in place on your lawn? Yes No
5. Keep fertilizers and pesticides out of water sources? Yes No
6. Use the right plants for your climate and soil conditions? Yes No
7. Apply mulch around trees, shrubs and gardens? Yes No
8. Cut your lawn at the highest recommended mower setting? Yes No
9. Correctly identify insect and weed problems? Yes No
10. Compost grass clippings, leaves and other organic material? Yes No
11. Learn how to care for your lawn, plants, soil, and wildlife? Yes No
12. Use well-adapted or native plants in your landscaping? Yes No



Questions that you answered “no” indicate areas where you might need to improve how you take care of your lawn or garden to become more eco-friendly.

1. Keep your yard safe, clean, and well maintained?

About two-thirds of households with a yard feel it is important add beauty to their home and neighborhood by maintaining their lawn.

2. Water your lawn and plants only when they need it?

Watering wisely is also foremost on the minds of yard and garden owners, as 65% of them claim to water only as needed. It is important to irrigate lawns infrequently, but deeply, to the depth of the root zone. You might also consider adding a drip system to gardens, shrubs, and trees.

3. Read and follow pesticide and fertilizer labels carefully?

Just over half of people with yards and gardens are careful to follow the directions on fertilizers and pesticides. It is important to never apply more than necessary and only where it is actually needed.

4. Leave grass clippings in place on your lawn?

It is important to reduce waste and recycle nutrients whenever possible. Leaving grass clippings in place provides nitrogen to the lawn.

5. Keep fertilizers and pesticides out of water sources?

Unfortunately, less than half of yard and garden owners seem to understand that they play an important role in reducing landscape pollution. It is important to prevent fertilizers, pesticides, yard debris, and pet waste from entering water sources or wastewater systems.

6. Use the right plants for your climate and soil conditions?

Choose the right plant for the right spot that meets the plant’s requirements for sun, water, and climate conditions. Locally adapted species will require less water, fertilizer, pruning, and pesticides. Only 42% of yard and garden owners bear this in mind when planning their landscapes.

7. Apply mulch around trees, shrubs and gardens?

Organic mulch will slow the rate of water runoff and increase soil permeability. You can also minimize soil erosion by designing your landscape to spread water flow across the ground surface.

8. Cut your lawn at the highest recommended mower setting?

Another way to prevent storm water runoff is to keep the mower setting high. It should be about 3 inches for lawns in the north and 1-2 inches in the south.

9. Correctly identify insect and weed problems?

Only about a third of yard and garden owners take the time or trouble to correctly identify the insect or weed problems they're having. After identifying a specific problem, the first line of defense is to change the conditions that invite pest problems, such as over watering, improper mowing, etc. If the problems persist, choose an organic or conventional product that best addresses your particular situation; spot treat for problems and don't use a weed and feed lawn product unless your problem is widespread. And always read and follow label directions.

10. Compost grass clippings, leaves and other organic material?

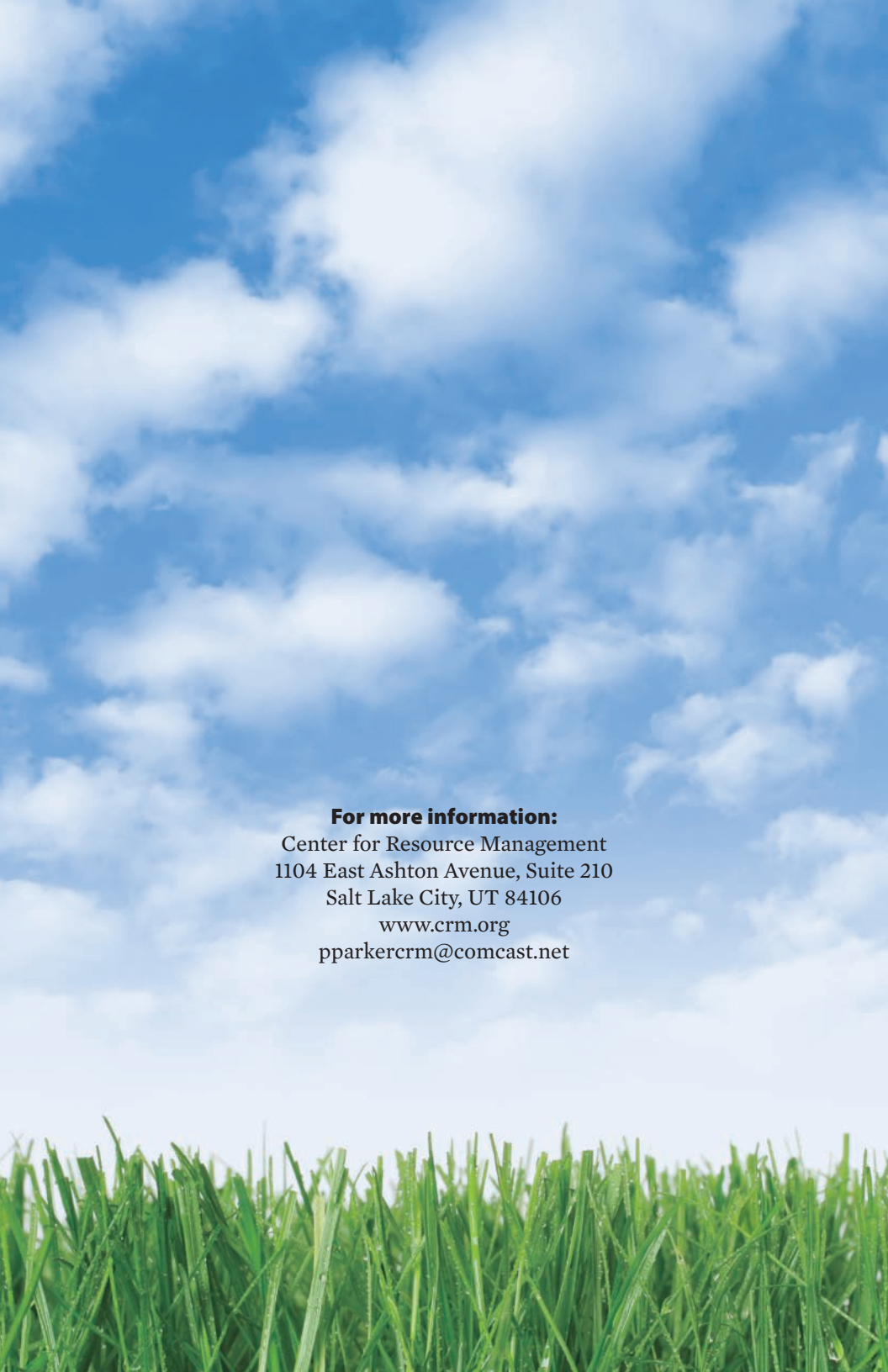
Composting reduces waste and recycles nutrients. Make compost that can be used as a natural fertilizer and can add organic matter, micro-nutrients, microbes, and earthworms to the soil. Sadly, less than a third of yard and garden owners say they compost.

11. Learn how to care for your lawn, plants, soil, and wildlife?

Identify sensitive areas such as wildlife nesting places and problem areas that can be improved with proper landscaping. Have the soil tested to determine if nutrients are needed.

12. Use well-adapted or native plants in your landscaping?

Avoid growing invasive plant species. Locally adapted plants require less water, fertilizer, pruning, and pesticides. Choose plants that can provide food and shelter for birds and other wildlife. Add flowering annuals and perennials that can attract birds, butterflies, and bees, which are important pollinators. Only a quarter of yard and garden owners say they are careful to choose well-adapted plants.



For more information:
Center for Resource Management
1104 East Ashton Avenue, Suite 210
Salt Lake City, UT 84106
www.crm.org
pparkercrm@comcast.net