Green Lawns, Green **Businesses Earthwise Landscapers Provide Environmental**, Money **Saving Options To Clients**

Special to the Salem Business Journal Those emerald green, manicured lawns-the ones that look like golf courses-aren't truly green.

The three EarthWISE-certified landscaping companies in Marion County will tell you. In order to get that weed-free perfect, polished look, you have to spend a lot of another kind



EarthWISE Landscapes

of green-money-on fertilizers, pesticides, water and even new sod every few years. So not only is it bad for the environment, it is bad for your budget.

DeSantis Landscapes, Green Acres Landscape and The Garden Angels are the three landscape companies in Marion County to earn EarthWISE certification. The EarthWISE program is a free business environmental assistance program of Marion County. Earth-WISE staff helps businesses recycle, save energy, reduce waste and much more.

For landscapers, EarthWISE certification shows clients that these companies not only run their business in an environmentally friendly way, but they also take an eco-approach to their clients' landscape projects.

For example, all three of these companies' landscapers are well-versed in native plant horticulture, and can design beautiful landscapes around the use of native Oregon plants.

"Native plantings don't have to look like roadside ditches," said Elizabeth Frances-Powers, landscape designer for The Garden Angels, which provides landscape design to homeowners and landscape companies. "You can make native plants look really attractive and ornamental in how you layer them with other hardy plants."

The natives are good for several reasons: they have natural defenses against the bugs so there is less need for pesticides; they have adapted to western Oregon's wildly wet winters and dry hot summers so there is little need to water; and, they need fewer fertilizers since they like Oregon's soil profiles.

All of these reasons add up to another reason why DeSantis, The Garden Angels and Green Acres turn to natives: to save money.

Clients learn from these EarthWISE businesses that many eco-friendly landscape practices save money through the lifespan of the landscape.

Frances-Powers of The Garden Angels often talks to clients about rain water collection and harvesting systems.

"It can be an expensive endeavor upfront but it pays for itself, usually in just a few years," she said. "Depending on how big the system is, the rain water collected from a rooftop can usually get the plant beds watered for most of a summer season."

Bonique Hollinrake, project manager of Green Acres, said that their landscapers also focus on water. Their landscapers will work very carefully to find the best irrigation system for the property. Green Acres staff also will maintain the system to ensure that it is providing the right amount of water at the right time and not leaking.

"We are also interested in using dry creek beds installed at a home or bioswales that help with runoff," Hollinrake said. "This helps keeps the water table clean."

In response to the demand for environmentally friendly alternatives, DeSantis Landscapes introduced a new service in 2005. Called Plant Health Care, the program focuses on the health of a landscape by improving plant and soil conditions.

In addition to the focus on a client's green landscape, these landscape companies employ several eco-friendly practices that save the companies money.

As DeSantis, for example, replaces old or broken equipment, new equipment is purchased that is more efficient and more environmentally friendly. The company replaces old trucks with diesel trucks, which run on a cleaner fuel: 20 percent biodiesel.

Landscaping equipment that used inefficient two-stroke engines has been replaced with four-stroke alternatives. The result: a quieter and more efficient machine that costs the same. DeSantis also switched to buying fuel for this equipment in bulk, which saves the



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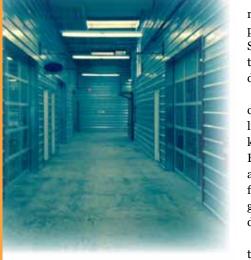
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INTRINSIC



February 2015

DeSantis composts all leaves on site and then uses that compost in landscaping projects. The company saves about \$5,000 each year on its garbage service to not haul those leaves away.

These internal changes within a landscaping company make a difference to the clientswhether or not the landscape they choose is sustainable.

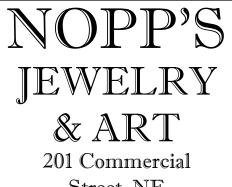
"It's always a big deal to make sure we are working as efficiently as possible and providing the best value," said Hollinrake of Green Acres. "We minimize our own energy and water use in office. If we cut costs there, we can push that value back to clients. That's why I like the EarthWISE certification for landscapers—it's not just out in the field or in the office; it is the complete business." Photo:

6-17-2007: Porous surfaces allow better water infusion and hardy perennials with low water needs add lots of color.

6-4-02 : Dry creeks can help capture runoff while providing a striking landscape feature. Photos courtesy of The Garden Angels



EarthWISE Garden Patio



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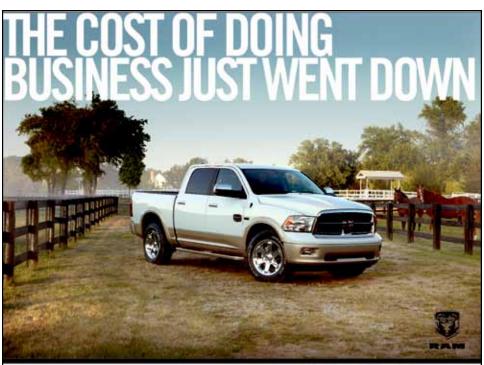
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