UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA MARINE EXTENSION SERVICE

CoastScapes

Conservation Landscaping for People, Wildlife, and Georgia's Coast

CoastScapes are environmentally sound native plant conservation landscapes which benefit people, the local environment, and coastal Georgia. Conservation landscaping works with nature to reduce pollution while creating diverse landscapes that conserve water, protect clean water and air, support wildlife and their native habitat, and provide a more beautiful, healthier human environment. Conservation landscaping can also be used to address areas with problems such as erosion, nutrient loss, sedimentation, poor soils, steep slopes, or poor drainage or to enhance and/or restore habitat. Conservation landscaping also provides valuable opportunities to reduce the effects of the human built and developed environment.

Initiated in January 2009, the University of Georgia Marine Extension Service is developing a comprehensive CoastScapes Conservation Landscaping Program for coastal Georgia. Outreach efforts to engage Georgians in conservation landscaping practices will be developed and implemented to help preserve the coast's water resources,


plants, habitats and wildlife; all of which are critical elements needed to nurture and preserve the complex web of life that characterizes coastal Georgia and its surrounding watersheds. In addition, as the coastal region begins to accommodate rapidly expanding urban growth, the program will help mitigate negative environmental impacts by promoting the adoption of comprehensive CoastScapes conservation landscaping concepts and practices with emphasis on the following components:

- Use of regional non-invasive native and beneficial plants;
- Water conservation by placing plants in the appropriate growing conditions, minimizing the use of supplemental watering and the amount of turf lawn, and implementing xeriscaping;
- Reduction or elimination of chemical fertilizer and pesticide use by planting native plants and practicing Integrated Pest Management (IPM);
- Purification of the air and water by planting native trees, shrubs, and perennials;
- Protection of existing natural areas and the watershed's "sense of place" as well as restoration, enhancement and/or creation of native habitat ;
- Incorporation of overall environmentally sensitive site design;
- Energy conservation by placing native trees, shrubs, vines and landscape structures in appropriate locations (to reduce heating and cooling needs) and reducing the use of power landscape equipment.;
- Incorporation of green infrastructure stormwater BMPs, such as:
    - better site planning (including preservation of undisturbed native habitat and vegetation),
    - better site design (including reduction of sidewalk lengths and widths, reducing setbacks and frontages) in order to reduce the amount of impervious surface,

    - low impact development (such as bioretention areas, rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavements, rain harvesting, soil restoration, and site reforestation/revegetation) in order to recharge groundwater and reduce runoff and the amount of impervious surface; and
    - plantings of native trees, shrubs, and perennial ground cover in swales and on terraces, in addition to level and raised areas, in order to reduce runoff and soil erosion and stabilize slopes;
- Implementation of invasive species control by avoiding the use of and removal and replacement of invasive plants;
- Providing wildlife habitat by planting native plants;
- Promotion and protection of pollinators, beneficial insects and coastal wildlife habitat needs;
- Mulching to conserve water, suppress weeds, improve soil structure, and to lessen erosion;
- Composting to reduce yard waste and to use as a soil amendment;
- Recycling and reusing materials to eliminate waste;
- Promotion of habitat linkage and connectivity;
- Maintenance of native plant gardens and planning for the long term;
- Guidance to the challenges and solutions of gardeners to global warming and climate change; and
- Learning to appreciate nature and toleration of imperfections in the garden.