



## City of Seattle

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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Seattle/King County Natural Yard Care Method Goes National** *Environmental Protection Agency Follows Popular Local Program*

**SEATTLE**—A popular local guide to natural yard care has been adopted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a model for their GreenScapes program, and a new nationally distributed brochure for homeowners.

Over the past four years, Seattle Public Utilities, the King County Solid Waste Division and other local public agencies have used their collaboratively developed guide, *Natural Yard Care: Five Steps to Make Your Piece of The Planet A Healthier Place To Live*, to promote healthy, environmentally friendly gardening practices.

The 16-page manual has started thousands of Puget Sound households on building healthy soil, composting, smart watering, natural lawn care and pest control, and other practices that save water, reduce waste, and reduce the need for chemicals.

*Natural Yard Care's* five steps are:

1. Build healthy soil.
2. Plant right for your site.
3. Practice smart watering.
4. Think twice before using pesticides.
5. Practice natural lawn care.

Now, working with King County and City of Seattle governments, the federal EPA has made those same five guiding principles the basis for its new GreenScapes program for homeowners. Local staff helped the EPA adapt the text of *Natural Yard Care* for its new brochure *GreenScaping*.

“Our yards are our outdoor homes: fun, beautiful, great spaces for relaxing,” the new EPA brochure says. “By taking care of our lawns and gardens properly, we can save

money, time, and help the environment. GreenScaping encompasses a set of landscaping practices that can improve the health and appearance of your lawn and garden while protecting and preserving natural resources.”

Sharon Aller, of King County’s Solid Waste Division said, “It is truly a compliment to see the five steps that our regional team worked on four years ago culminate in a new national publication.”

“*Natural Yard Care* is constantly in demand,” said Seattle Public Utilities’ David McDonald. Co-author of the locally produced yard care guide, McDonald assisted the EPA in developing the brochure for national distribution.

“Other cities around Puget Sound often ask to copy it, but we’re very excited to see the EPA getting behind these ideas on a national level,” McDonald said.

EPA’s GreenScapes program manager Jean Schwab said the advance response and requests for the agency’s new brochure have been overwhelmingly positive.

“By keeping the EPA brochure similar to your local *Natural Yard Care* guide, we hope to both support your efforts and also to deliver a message that holds true for the rest of the nation,” Schwab wrote in a thank-you letter to McDonald and Aller.

“I believe we have succeeded given the overwhelmingly positive response we have received from academia, industry, and private citizens,” Schwab said.

The new EPA brochure is available at <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/green/owners.htm>

The Seattle/King County manual is available, in English or Spanish, at: [www.seattle.gov/util/Services/Yard/Natural Lawn & Garden Care/Natural Yard Care](http://www.seattle.gov/util/Services/Yard/Natural_Lawn_&_Garden_Care/Natural_Yard_Care), or <http://www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/naturalyardcare/index.asp>, or by calling the Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline at 206-633-0224.

In addition to providing a reliable water supply to more than 1.3 million customers in the Seattle metropolitan area, Seattle Public Utilities provides essential sewer, drainage, solid waste and engineering services that safeguard public health, maintain the city’s infrastructure and protect, conserve and enhance the region's environmental resources.

King County’s Solid Waste Division provides environmentally responsible waste transfer and disposal services to nearly three quarters of the county’s population. Public awareness and education campaigns encourage conservation of resources and promote recycling. The division operates seven transfer stations, two rural drop boxes and the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill.

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