

### Greening Up Yards To Mow Down Energy Costs

(NAPSA)—Finding Earth-friendly ways to care for your yard could save you some serious green.

Still, a recent survey found that almost all U.S. adults have adopted sustainable or energy-efficient practices inside the home, but only 58 percent use energy- or water-saving techniques in their yard, lawn or garden.

So how can you green up your landscaping? Try these tips:

- Plant shade trees to help lower energy costs (only 29 percent of respondents said they had done so).

- Use maintenance methods such as raking, rather than using a leaf blower, to reduce fuel emissions (only 23 percent of respondents said they had done so).

- Harvest rainwater or use recycled water for watering plants (15 percent of respondents had) or use drip irrigation.

The survey, sponsored by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), also examined attitudes of those with yards, lawns or gardens about sustainable landscape practices. Only 13 percent disagreed with the statement “I would use more ‘green’ yard practices if I knew more about them.”

#### Greener Future

To help homeowners go greener, ASLA partnered with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at The University of Texas at Austin, and the United States Botanic Garden, to launch the Sustainable Sites Initiative. The initiative’s goal is to eventually create voluntary guidelines and a



**“Green” yard practices could save consumers cash.**

rating system for sustainable landscape design.

Once widely used, experts say the guidelines could change not only the landscape and gardening industry, but also raise public expectations about the health and quality of the built environment.

But how big a difference can greener gardening practices make?

According to findings from the garden/garden project in Santa Monica, Calif., a native plant garden can cost about \$4,300 more to construct than a conventional one, but it uses 77 percent less water, produces 66 percent less green waste and costs 68 percent less to maintain per year.

The findings, along with additional case studies and information, were included in a recent Sustainable Sites Initiative report. The group hopes to solicit feedback on its proposed benchmarks and guidelines, and to produce a rating system by 2011.

For more information, visit [www.sustainable sites.org](http://www.sustainable sites.org).