

## Dig Deeper Into Ecological Design and Maintenance

**Y**our current or prospective landscape professional can learn more about these practices by requesting a copy of the *River-Friendly Landscape Guidelines: Sustainable Practices for the Landscape Professional*. Available FREE to landscape professionals in Sacramento County. Ordering instructions are at:

[www.sacramentostormwater.org/riverfriendly](http://www.sacramentostormwater.org/riverfriendly)  
or (916) 874-8024.



River-Friendly  
available at:

[www.sacramentostormwater.org/riverfriendly](http://www.sacramentostormwater.org/riverfriendly)

and the new *River-Friendly Landscape Guidelines* for Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership in cooperation with the original Bay-Friendly landscape publications

**Stormwater Quality Partnership (SSQP)** is to reduce pollution and informs the public about urban runoff pollution and works to encourage pollution prevention and reduce erosion. It is a partnership between the County of Sacramento and area public agencies, including the County of Sacramento and Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Rancho Cordova, and Sacramento. Partnership is available at: [www.sacramentostormwater.org](http://www.sacramentostormwater.org).

# CHOOSING A LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL FOR YOUR RIVER-FRIENDLY GARDEN



## Landscaping Locally

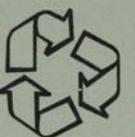
### Does the company...



- Test the soil? Knowing the soil's fertility, texture, and structure helps determine soil quality, types of plants it can best support and any need for supplements.
- Use local, natural plant communities as models? A plant community is a relatively distinct pattern of vegetation found in different regions of the Central Valley. Using local plant communities as a model is a way to work with nature to create spectacular landscapes.
- Practice fireescaping in high-risk fire areas? Understanding the topography, fuel and local weather are critical to designing and maintaining a landscape that reduces the potential for loss to fire. Plant selection is also very important to reducing the fuel load and avoiding fire ladders.

## Landscaping for Less to the Landfill

### Does the company...



- Select appropriate plants? Choosing the right plants for the right space is an important way to reduce the 200,000 tons of plant debris diverted annually in Sacramento County. Selecting plants that can grow to their mature size in the space allotted, replacing sheared hedges with natural shapes, and avoiding invasive species are sound practices.
- Grasscycle? Grasscycling means leaving the clippings on the lawn after mowing so they decompose and release their nutrients into the soil.
- Compost plant debris? Or keep plant debris separated from trash for curbside pick-up? Composting is the controlled decomposition of organic matter. It turns plant debris into a beneficial soil amendment.
- Prune selectively and properly? Pruning should complement the natural form, and strengthen the structural integrity of, the plant. It should not be used to severely restrict plant growth — improper pruning weakens the plant and generates unnecessary waste.



*Broken concrete is used to create a retaining wall.*

# ASK

### Using compost

conserves

water and

adds nutrients

to your soil.



## Nurturing the Soil

### Does the company...



- Protect soil from erosion and compaction during construction? Conserving topsoil protects soil structure and the soil's ability to support the microbes that cycle nutrients and filter pollutants. Local waterways and aquatic habitat are also protected.
- Amend the soil with compost before planting? Compost fosters a diverse, fertile, and disease suppressive soil. It can improve structure, aeration and water holding capacity of the soil.
- Mulch regularly? Mulch conserves water, improves soil life, and enhances the growth of plants and the appearance of the landscape.
- Feed soils naturally? Using natural amendments, adding compost to the soil, or drenching the soil with compost tea, nurtures a strong soil foodweb. This makes nutrients available to the plants and protects water quality.

# Why should you care about the practices of your landscape company?



*“River-Friendly” offers a holistic approach to landscaping that works with nature to reduce waste, prevent pollution and support the integrity of one of California’s key ecosystems, the Sacramento River watershed.*

## Our gardens

can be a haven for migratory birds, wildlife and our families or they can be a significant source of pollution and waste.

How a landscape professional manages your yard and garden – from using pesticides to choosing plants – has an impact on your garden, our natural resources and the Sacramento River watershed. Urban runoff carries pesticides, sediment, and fertilizer into stormdrains which lead to our creeks, waterways and eventually the Sacramento River.

Landscape professionals who use River-Friendly practices can eliminate or minimize these hazards. Building healthy soil by using compost and mulch is one such practice. Adding compost and mulch to the soil helps conserve water, reduces weeds and the need for pesticides – while also turning the soil into a living filter which removes pollutants from water. Using compost and mulch becomes the link between protecting our watersheds,

nutrients – endlessly. It pays attention to climate and local conditions and uses plants that are adapted to those conditions. It follows maintenance practices that support the goals of conserving resources and reducing waste.

### This approach to gardening:

- Landscapes locally
- Landscapes for less to the landfill
- Nurtures the soil
- Conserves water
- Conserves energy
- Protects water & air quality
- Creates & protects wildlife habitat



All River-Friendly gardens are not alike – a River-Friendly landscape can be your Mediterranean retreat, a shaded woodland or a wildlife habitat. It can include edible gardens, fruiting trees, beds of cutting flowers or play areas for your children. It does not limit you and your landscaper but offers a wide array of choices for

- Specify local products and suppliers?

Buying local reduces the hidden environmental costs, such as pollution and energy consumption of transporting materials.

- Protect trees that help moderate building temperatures?
  - Trees help conserve energy by shading, cooling the air through evapotranspiration, and providing wind breaks.
- Use hand-powered equipment while minimizing the use of gas-powered equipment?
  - Reducing fossil fuel consumption protects the health of the operator and local air and water quality.

## Protecting Water & Air Quality

### Does the company...



- Use an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach?

IPM is a holistic approach to insects, plant diseases, weeds, and other pests. First and foremost, IPM seeks to prevent pests by fostering a healthy, diverse landscape in which plants have the strength to resist disease and insect pests, and to out-compete weeds.

- Try alternative approaches before turning to pesticides?
  - Least toxic pesticides should be used as a last resort when preventative and non-chemical methods are not keeping pests below acceptable levels.

pollinators?

With thoughtful plant selection and design, home landscapes can provide food, water, shelter and nesting sites for birds, butterflies, beneficial insects and other creatures.



- Foster biodiversity?
  - A diverse landscape includes annuals, biennials and perennials of many different sizes, shapes, colors and textures. It includes evergreens and deciduous plants, species that bloom at different times of the year and those that bear fruit or berries. Diversity provides habitat for wildlife and beneficial organisms that help control plant pests.



*Protect kids and pets. Avoid using garden chemicals.*

# PROTECT