

# Steps to a Beautiful Yard



## Beautification Committee

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We're on Facebook, too!



The HCCC Beautification Committee is dedicated to encouraging residents throughout the City of Hampton to beautify their landscapes for themselves, their neighborhood, and their city. The Committee sponsors the Yards Are Really Distinguished Showplaces (YARDS) contest. It also oversees the Commission's urban forestry education program.

## What is a Beautiful Yard?

A beautiful yard combines elements of aesthetic appeal with application of good gardening practices. A beautiful yard not only makes your home and neighborhood look better, but it also makes our city environment healthier and more beautiful.

The Hampton Clean City Commission is happy to provide some guidelines for helping you make the most of your yard. We urge you, however, to seek expert advice from Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) and the VCE Master Gardeners in Hampton. Master Gardeners are volunteers and neighbors who are happy to help you with your landscaping questions. VCE staff includes a skilled horticulturalist who can provide an enormous amount of free unbiased research-based information to you. Call Virginia Cooperative Extension at 727-1401 for technical assistance.

### Step 1: Evaluate Your "Curb Appeal"

Stand across the street from your house and look at your home landscape as a stranger might. Does it look nice? Is it colorful & well-balanced? Are plantings graduated by size and scaled to their location? What would make it look better?

### Step 2: Plan Your Landscape for Easy & Effective Maintenance

Reduce the size of your lawn with flower beds and islands to reduce lawn maintenance efforts! Use ground cover and mulches to control weeds. Choose from a variety of paving options for heavily used areas. Look above your yard to plan for future growth of plants—no tall trees under the power lines, please!

### Step 3: Allow Your Landscape to Reflect You & Your Family

Use yard ornaments, picnic & play areas, gazebos, or other features to show that your yard is part of your home. Add wildlife habitat features like ponds, rock gardens, or feeders, or make your yard an outdoor living space.

### Step 4: Carefully Select Plants & Trees

Call Cooperative Extension for lists of plants that will enhance your landscape and remain healthy in Hampton's local environment. Visit local plant retailers and select healthy plants that are varied in mature size, shape, color, and texture. Look especially for native plants; native varieties are usually more resistant to pests and drought. The better adapted your plants are to your yard conditions, the easier it will be to care for them.



### Step 5: Use Trees & Shrubs to Enhance & Protect Your Home & Landscape

Use trees to shade your house & air conditioning equipment to reduce summer energy demands.

Use wind-breaking trees or shrubs on the north side of your house to block winter winds. Use trees to add color and texture to your landscape. Select flowering trees, trees that have beautiful fall colors, or trees with interesting bark as focal points for your landscape. Take the full-grown size of the tree into account *before* planting it!



### Step 6: Plant With Care

Follow expert advice in placing and planting your plants. Allow plants plenty of space to grow! Put them where they would look best fully grown. Place plants with similar sun, water, and fertilizer needs together.

### Step 7: Water Your Landscape Conservatively

If you select drought-resistant plants and plant them properly, you can start counting your savings in time and lower water bills. When you DO water, water deeply. Light sprinkling will waste water and produce shallow roots. Set up rain barrels to capture water for the dry season.

### Step 8: Be A "Maintenance Miser"

Plan and plant to reduce lawn maintenance. Select pest- and drought-resistant plants, plant them properly, and maintain them properly. Then sit back and enjoy them without polluting the environment or wasting time.



### Step 9: Good Equipment Saves Time & Trouble

Maintain your mower and lawn tools. Sharp lawn mower blades provide a cleaner, healthier cut for your lawn. Sharp shovels, spades, and other digging tools make work easier and faster.



### Step 10: Use Lawn Chemicals Sparingly

Remember that your yard is just one storm drain away from the Chesapeake Bay. Use lawn chemicals as sparingly as if you were pouring them directly into your drinking water! Consult Virginia Cooperative Extension for proper fertilization techniques. Only use pesticides after you identify the specific problem and then select the proper chemical registered for use with your problem. Be kind to the environment—try to use nontoxic alternatives before turning to chemicals!

### Step 11: Keep Your Organic Materials to Yourself

Mulch your grass clippings and leave them on the ground to keep your lawn healthy. Start a compost pile to maintain a good supply of inexpensive soil conditioner on hand for your landscape. Composting is a good way to put your fruit and vegetable peelings to work for you as well, instead of sending them off for disposal.

## Hampton Clean City Commission

Formed in 1978 by Hampton City Council, the Clean City Commission is a Virginia Clean Community Organization and an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, Inc. The Commission seeks to encourage individual responsibility in enhancing and protecting Hampton's beautiful natural environment through litter prevention and awareness programs, community beautification efforts, school pride in action programs, and workplace education. We welcome volunteers and partners.

To Volunteer—Call 727-1130 or e-mail [hccc@hampton.gov](mailto:hccc@hampton.gov).