



# CONSERVATION

## Connection News

### The Sustainability Issue

*Meeting the demands of today without sacrificing resources for the future.*

## Increasing Value by Understanding the Sustainable Landscape

What do you think of when you hear the word sustainability? By definition, sustainability is the responsible use of resources to meet the demands of today without sacrificing the resources for future generations. For some, the term sustainability is misinterpreted as a red herring, concocted by those that would suggest you scrap a business model you have spent years perfecting. In actuality, building sustainable landscapes through every day activities builds long-term health and resource availability, which benefits your company as much as it benefits your community and our environment. According to the National Weather Service, drought conditions persist across all of Oregon, driven by above average temperatures and near to below average water year precipitation and snowpack in 2018 (NWS, 2018). As

climate conditions become more variable from year to year, business as usual will face increasing challenges. By applying some simple strategies, you can get your business ahead of the game.

We all know the benefits of what we do, but measuring the true effects of our industry is a “big picture” undertaking. There are a few questions we can ask ourselves to measure our individual contributions and successes. Sustainable landscapes start with gaining a perspective of what you want the future of your community to be, and decide your company’s role.

Some areas we can reflect on our business:

- Are our maintenance practices adding to or alleviating the community’s water demand
- Are our maintenance practices adding to or alleviating the amount of

pollutants (fertilizer, pesticides, sediment etc..)

- Are our designs consciously alleviating the water demand by utilizing appropriate plant material, efficient smart irrigation designs and building healthy soil.
- Are our designs adding to or alleviating the transportation of pollutants by having the right plant in the right place and limiting impermeable surfaces and runoff.
- Are we building equity in our work force by investing in long term employee’s through wages, training programs for entry level employees, continued education, certifications, etc.

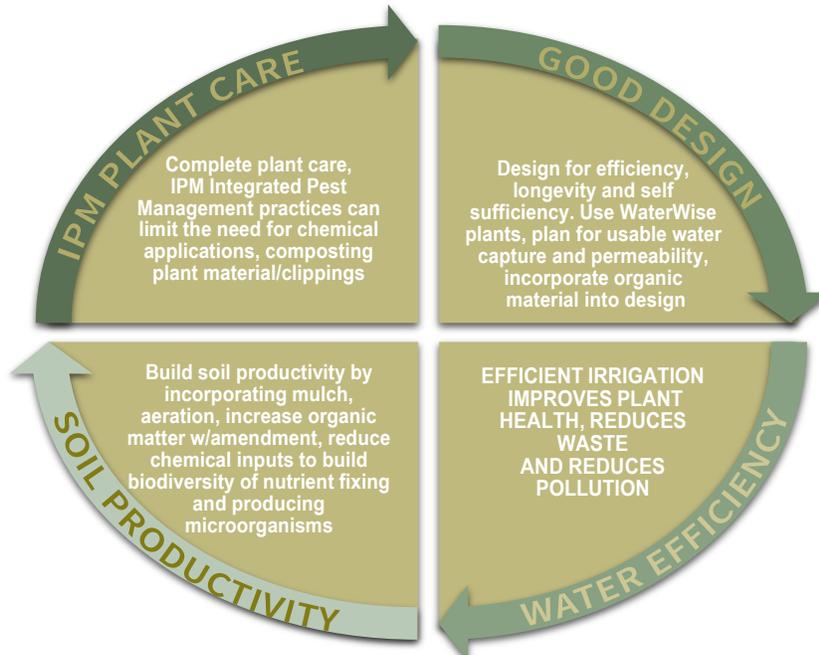
The goal of your sustainability assessment would be to identify immediate and gradual changes you can apply to the daily operations of your business. Some low hanging fruit can

include specifying efficient equipment that offers additional management capabilities on the systems we install. The information we have learned in our trade over the years about soils, plant physiology and irrigation hydraulics should guide our maintenance practices.

Include making irrigation adjustments based on actual soil moisture and seasonal plant need rather than a fixed schedule and taking a complete approach to plant care. Larger steps could include making efforts to build healthy soil in our landscapes, reviewing how we select and how we apply certain chemicals in our landscapes and considering how we design our landscapes to use and or capture water.

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# Complete Your Sustainable Landscape Loop



The OSU Extension covers some sustainable practices through the “Seven steps of water-wise gardening” in their publication Water-wise Gardening in Central Oregon. The Waterwise Gardening guide can be viewed and downloaded at [WaterWiseTips.org](http://WaterWiseTips.org), under the WaterWise Landscaping tab.

Proper planning can avoid potential negative side effects. This turf strip (fig.1) is a direct conduit of wasted water and fertilizer to the drain. This sparsely planted street strip (fig.2) is irrigated overhead and experiences water lost through overspray and deflection as plants mature.

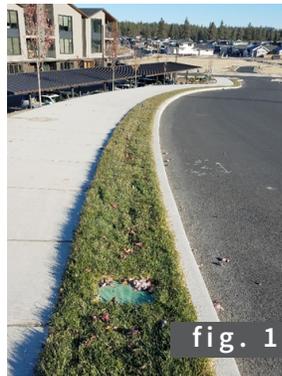


fig. 1

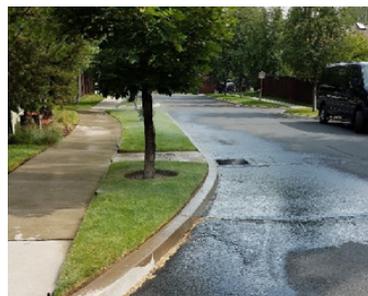


fig. 2

Sustainable design is “just right” landscaping that increases value by balancing cost, aesthetics and sustainability practices. See examples below...

### TOO MUCH

Heavy use of inputs, water, fertilizer and herbicides - high cost and a conduit for waste and pollutants.



### TOO LITTLE

Eliminates water need, but requires herbicides, radiates heat and lacks curb appeal.



### JUST RIGHT

Low water needs, no overspray, no herbicides, attracts pollinators, great curb appeal - increases value.



## Upcoming Events

### 2019 WINTER WORKSHOPS FOR CONTRACTORS

Focusing on the technical aspects of water use in the landscape

Tuesday, January 8  
**Drip Irrigation** w/ Molly McDowell-Dunston, North of South Landscape

Tuesday, January 15  
**Water Management** w/ Dan Denning, WaterWise Program

Tuesday, February 5  
**Water-wise planting** w/ Amy-Jo Detweiler, OSU Extension

All workshops are free, and CEH's are available. Please RSVP to: [conservation@bendoregon.gov](mailto:conservation@bendoregon.gov)



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