



Yard Certification Checklist

Use this checklist to evaluate your yard and maintenance practices.

Green Yards and Communities honors model landscapes as “Certified Green Yards” and provides a Green Yards and Communities sign to those homeowners.

To be certified as a Green Yard, you must receive at least 36 points (a “yard”) on this checklist. Please complete the following information and submit this form *with a picture of your yard* to:

K-State Research and Extension – Douglas County
Douglas County 4-H Fairgrounds
2110 Harper St
Lawrence KS 66046
dg@list.oznet.ksu.edu

Once we receive your completed checklist and picture, you are eligible to receive a Green Yards and Communities sign.

Your Contact Information:

Name:		Phone:
Street Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
E-mail:		

For more information on how to enact the following practices, visit www.KansasGreenYards.org or contact K-State Research and Extension-Douglas County at 785-843-7058 or dg@list.oznet.ksu.edu .

In all Yards:	Points Possible	Points Received
Landscape does not intentionally include plants identified as noxious or invasive by county codes. (In Douglas County, primary noxious species are: Musk thistle, Johnson grass, Field bindweed, and Sericea lespedeza.) Kansas Noxious Weed Information: http://www.ksda.gov/plant_protection/content/181	2	
If used, mulch is pulled away from the base of plants and trees – not piled on tree base.	2	
Grass clippings, fertilizer, and soil are swept from impervious surfaces and returned to lawn or landscape or disposed of properly.	1	
Shrubs are pruned using dormant or low-impact thinning methods – no sheared hedges.	1	
Attend a Green Yards and Communities sponsored training.	3	

Right Plant Right Place	Points Possible	Points Received
Plants are grouped according to their water and maintenance needs.	1	
Trees and shrubs are positioned for energy efficiency. (Use deciduous trees on southern or southwestern exposures to allow the sun to passively heat your home in winter.)	1	
Majority of plants in landscape are low-maintenance – require minimal fertilizer and watering.	1	
Majority of plants are adapted to environment and appropriate for site.	1	
Majority of plants will not require frequent pruning at maturity.	1	
Plants are spaced appropriately based on mature size.	1	
Trees near overhead or underground utilities are spaced at appropriate distances according to guidelines of power company.	3	
Trees are maintained with good pruning practices to reduce damage in ice and wind storms.	1	
If in city limits, street trees comply with city subdivision code – one tree for every 40 feet of street frontage.	1	

Fertilize Appropriately	Points Possible	Points Received
A soil test has been conducted before fertilizing. (Submit soil for testing at the Douglas County Extension Office, call 785-843-7058 for more information.)	2	
Minimal to no supplemental fertilization used in landscape beds.	1	
Lawns are only fertilized when appropriate for species. Fescue: September and November (and May, if irrigated) Kentucky Bluegrass: September and November Zoysiagrass: May-August (2 applications maximum) Bermudagrass: May-August (2 applications maximum) Buffalograss: June Perennial Ryegrass: September and November	1	

Water Efficiently	Points Possible	Points Received
Landscape is designed to exist primarily on rainfall once established.	2	
Watering is done early in the morning, or if done in the evening, completed at least 2 hours before dark.	1	
Lawns and landscapes are watered only when they wilt.	1	
For Irrigated yards:		
Proper backflow devices in place.	1	
Irrigation system is calibrated to only apply 1 inch to 1 ½ inches of water per week.	1	
Separate zones for lawn and landscape areas are maintained.	2	
Drip or micro irrigation is installed in landscape beds.	1	
Rain Shut-off device is installed.	2	
Functioning smart irrigation technology (soil moisture sensors, ET controllers or other automated devices) are used.	3	
If smart irrigation technology is not present, a rain gauge is used to monitor rainfall.	1	
Irrigation does not water hardscape surfaces.	1	

Grasscycle	Points Possible	Points Received
Lawns are mowed at height appropriate to grass species. -Fescue: 2.5-3.5 inches -Kentucky Bluegrass: 2-3 inches -Zoysiagrass: 1-2 inches -Bermudagrass: 1-2 inches -Buffalograss: 2-3 inches -Perennial ryegrass: 2-3 inches	1	
Grass clippings are left on lawn.	1	
Yard waste is used on site (compost bin or pile, or used in landscape) or placed in proper container for compost for pick-up by the City's Yard Waste Recycling Program.	1	
An electric lawn mower or a manually-operated reel mower is used instead of one powered by gasoline.	3	

Mulch	Points Possible	Points Received
A 2-3" layer of organic mulch is present around young trees and in landscape beds. Inorganic mulch is used only where organic mulch is not feasible.	1	
Self-mulching areas exist under trees where leaves can remain where they fall, especially under evergreens.	1	
Mulch is replenished once or twice a year to maintain a 2-3 inch depth.	1	
Newspaper is layered under mulch to suppress weeds.	1	

Reduce Stormwater Runoff and Pollution	Points Possible	Points Received
Roof runoff drains onto lawn or landscaped areas instead of impervious surfaces.	1	
No thinly vegetated areas prone to erosion are present.	1	
Mulch, bricks, flagstones, gravel, or other porous surfaces are used for walkways and patios when possible. (Follow building codes.)	1	
Rain barrels or cisterns are used to collect rainwater.	2	
Rain gardens and swales are created to collect and filter stormwater runoff.	3	
Pollutants such as pet waste and motor oil are disposed of properly.	1	
Trash, grass clippings, leaves, lawn chemicals, etc. are removed from street and curblane and disposed of properly.	1	
If property has a creek or pond, a minimum 10-foot wide "no fertilizer, no pesticide" zone is established with low-maintenance grass or plantings.	1	

Pest Management	Points Possible	Points Received
Landscape avoids plants that are highly prone to pest attack.	1	
Plants are checked every 1-2 weeks for signs or problems.	1	
Problems are positively identified before being treated.	2	
Non-chemical approaches are used for pest control, such as pruning off affected areas, hand-removing insects, etc., whenever possible.	2	
All labels on pesticide products are read before the product is applied.	3	
Environmentally friendly pesticides such as horticultural oils and insecticidal soaps are used as a first choice if applying products.	1	
Any pesticide and fertilizer products that are more than 1 year old are taken to Household Hazardous Waste facilities for disposal.	1	

Attract Wildlife	Points Possible	Points Received
Vines, shrubs, and trees are planted that provide cover, nesting areas, or food sources for birds, butterflies, and/or other wildlife	3	
A water source, such as a bird bath or a small pond, is provided for wildlife. Shallow rocks that hold water are adequate for butterflies.	1	
Wildlife shelters such as a bat house, bird house, brush pile, etc. are provided.	1	



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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
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