

## Green Grounds Policy and Implementation

Bernards Township has established a “green” grounds and maintenance policy. This comprehensive policy has been formulated through input and involvement of the green team, department of public works, department of parks and recreation, planning department, environmental commission, and engineering department.

The policy encourages and promotes measures and initiatives that protect, preserve, and enhance the environmental quality and health of residents of the community.

An integrated approach is being used, incorporating efficient landscape design, minimization of water consumption, utilization of recycled materials and composting, and implementation of an integrated pest management policy.

A number of actions have already been taken regarding implementation of this policy. Several areas maintained by the town have been planted with native vegetation, replacing lawn areas wherever possible. This has saved the town in water usage, mowing costs and associated pollution (both air and water), reduced energy costs and helped enhance biodiversity in the community. The public works department has also installed rain barrels and utilized other measures such as stone curbing to help mitigate and control stormwater runoff.

This is all part of a comprehensive environmental sustainability program which also incorporates IPM practices, limiting the use of pesticides and fertilizers properties, actively invests in purchasing and protecting open space, and encourages residents to partake in the “going green” initiative.

Some of the specific measures already being implemented include:

- Compost landscape waste (e.g. leaves, prunings, etc) or use the waste as mulch, using the “wood hog” mulching machine
- In house use of EZ Screener to recover soil and use in field maintenance
- Use native species instead of exotic plants whenever possible. Native species require less maintenance and provide valuable habitat for local wildlife.
- Minimize lawn areas to reduce required maintenance, and replace lawn areas with higher value landscaping.

- Design landscaping with stormwater management in mind. Consider property contours and create plantings that will slow water flows and filter runoff to improve groundwater recharge and prevent erosion.
- Significantly reduce or eliminate the use of conventional pesticides through an Integrated Pest Management program.
- Avoid excessive fertilizer use. Test soils for pH to determine which plants are best-suited to the soil type. Further test soils to determine composition, and then apply specific fertilizers to correct soil chemistry if needed instead of using a generic mix that often provides excess phosphorus.
- Improve operations with efficient watering schedules, improved irrigation equipment, and rainwater capture. Water the landscape only when needed instead of setting schedules that are not sensitive to weather and species-specific needs. Minimize evaporation, and utilize efficient irrigation techniques, such as drip irrigation systems. Be sure to search for and fix leaks promptly.
- Incorporation of the “Green garage” program, under the jurisdiction of the Public Works Department. All vehicles are serviced and maintained with an emphasis on utilizing environmentally friendly practices including recycling, maximizing vehicle life, and using environmentally preferred products whenever possible.