

What Is Green Space Worth?

Prepared By Chester Co. Conservation District Office WEST CHESTER (Chester) — Depending on point of view, green space can mean dollars in the form of trees to a lumber company, a hassle in clearing to a developer, or peace and fresh air to a conservationist. But, as we exist in a developing area, we must work with those with varying interests. The best and wisest planning for trees and other green space is critical. With little extra effort, simply greater knowledge of alternatives, less of our open lands need to come to paved endings.

When open lands are converted to impervious developed areas (buildings, parking lots, etc.), one of the major drawbacks is the loss of overland flow, the natural course for the water to re-enter the

ground. Man made systems often divert this water to a stream or other waterway, depriving the area of needed groundwater. In addition, the receiving waterway is more subject to flooding during wet seasons due to unnatural increases in water contribution. There are many ways to reduce these negative impacts, whether you are a homeowner or a large scale developer.

All too often trees are removed to expedite a construction project. Trees and brush are a prime source of oxygen, animal habitat, shade, and pollution uptake. Each tree should be carefully considered before it is disturbed. Work around trees whenever possible. Innovative ways to pave around trees can be rewarding and pleasing to the eye. An extra 10-15

square feet around the base of the tree provides a means for water to re-enter the ground at that point.

Alternatives To Paving

There are many alternatives available over the usual concrete for paved surfaces. Concrete lattice pavers are designed to allow water to pass through spaces in the material where grass or herbs can also thrive. Normal traffic or a lawnmower keeps the greens at bay. A patio or sidewalk can be planned with a favorite herb (thyme is commonly used in England). When the plants are walked over, oils are released with a pleasant aroma.

Porous asphalt is another alternative. The main difference to that of conventional asphalt or concrete is the space available in the

material to retain water, allowing it to soak through to the underlying ground. Any of these methods can be used for driveways, parking lots, sidewalks, patios, basin spillways, and more.


The more trees and brush the better...planting can be well planned to serve a number of purposes. If your area is one with noise, wind, pollution, unsightly structures, or direct sunlight, plantings can alleviate these negatives. While many species attract an abundance of birds and other wildlife, most desirable are the natives of your area. Natural defenses of these species will usually eliminate any need for pest control. Soil type, ground moisture, and sun exposure should also be considered when choosing plantings.

Build Up- Not Out

Building up instead of out utilizes open space most efficiently. Many buildings require a ground level design, but many houses or office buildings could use far less ground with as much inner space. Natural ground cover, that is, undeveloped open space, distributes water coming into its system in the following percentages: 10% run-off, 40% evapotranspiration, 25% shallow infiltration, and 25% deep infiltration. In contrast, land that has been paved has 55% run-off, 30% evapotranspiration, 10% shallow infiltration, and 5% deep infiltration.

As can be seen, there are major increases in run-off from developed land which causes accelerated erosion and related problems. The great decrease in infiltration deprives vegetation and groundwater systems of natural waters. Also, infiltration through the ground is the primary means that pollutants are filtered out of the water. To minimize these effects, impervious surfaces can be planned wisely, incorporating as much open space into the design as possible. You will benefit from this equally as much as the environment.

For more information on these topics, please write or call the Chester County Conservation District at 235 West Market Street, West Chester, PA 19382. Our phone number is 215-696-5126.



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Slide Program Offered On LISA

ATLANTA, Ga. — One of the hottest topics among people in agriculture today is the issue of "low-input sustainable agriculture" (LISA). This movement grew out of concerns for groundwater quality and other challenges toward conventional production agriculture in the U.S.

In response to the many questions surrounding the LISA effort, the Potash & Phosphate Institute (PPI) has prepared a set of 45 color 35mm slides, with printed script. The program is titled: "Low-Input Sustainable Agriculture (LISA) and the Groundwater Issue: What Is It? What Does It Represent? What Are The Alternatives?"

With emphasis on sound agronomic information, the slide program explains that conventional production agriculture, with farmers adopting best management practices, remains the best approach to assure profitability, input conservation and efficiency, environmental protection, and sustainable food supplies.

The color slide set with script is available at a cost of \$15.00 plus postage. For more information, contact: Circulation Department, Potash & Phosphate Institute (PPI) 2801 Buford Hwy, N.E., Suite 401, Atlanta, GA 30329 Phone: (404) 634-4274.

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