Landscape Sustainability Audit

This check-up form is for Landscape contractors to use while they are walking the property performing the Sustainable Landscape Audit or for residents to self-check their property. Use this form to rate the sustainability of a residential landscape and act as an informative and educational document.
{15-20 = Excellent, 10-14 = Good, 0-9 = Poor}

1) **Plants on site** – Sustainable plants are well adapted to local climate, soil, and rainfall patterns, requiring less summer watering than conventional landscape plants. They are California-friendly and thrive without pesticides or extensive fertilizer application. For more information on plant selection visit Garden Spot at: www.bewaterwise.com

Place a +1, or a -1, for each criteria listed below, and then add up the total for the Total Plant Score:

+1 For Appropriate Plants
___ Watered 2x per week
___ Watered only 1x per week
___ Plants have proper growing space to reach full size

-1 For Inappropriate Plants
___ Watered more than 2x per week
___ Plants use lots of fertilizer (ie Gardenia)
___ Plants need pesticides (ie Hibiscus, Eugenia)

Total Plants Score_____

2) **Turf on site** – According to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, turf grass is one of the most water-intensive plants in your landscape. The high water use and frequent maintenance needs make it a time-consuming, expensive option. Check MWD website www.socalwatersmart.com for rebates and information on turf removal and more.

Place a +3 for less than 25% turf or a +1 for less than 50% turf, and then add to Turf Score:

Turf Score_____

3) **Irrigation** – It is important to review your irrigation system, one zone at a time. Ensuring equipment is up-to-date and monitoring for leaks or overspray are important water conservation measures.

Updated irrigation systems will score the highest points. To evaluate the irrigation, you must run each of the zones on the system. If any of the below listed "water savers" occur in any zone score the "+1" for the whole irrigation system. If any of the below listed "water wasters" occur in any zone score the "-1" one time for the whole system.

+1 Water Savers
___ Drip irrigation
___ Rotary sprinklers
___ Smart controller
___ Rain sensor
___ Hand Watering
___ Irrigation off during winter
___ Turf grass zone & beds separate

-1 Water Wasters
___ "Fogging" sprinklers
___ Leaks
___ Overspray on paved areas
___ Microspray emitters
___ Water does not soak in during irrigation (runs off)

Total Irrigation Score____

4) **Wildlife** – Provide for migrating and resident birds and butterflies. Flowering nectar and seed-producing plants are essential food sources. Shrubs serve as cover, while a small fountain or large moving-water feature supply a drink and a bath.

Place a +1 if you identify plants and shrubs that are supportive of wildlife, and a +1 if you provide water. Then add up your Wildlife Score:

___ Plants with nectar and seeds
___ Shrubs that provide cover and protection
___ Fresh-water source

Wildlife Score_____

5) **Water Retention** – Prevent water run-off to promote clean oceans, and maintain our ground water supplies by directing irrigation and rain water where it can percolate down, into your permeable landscape. Or collect rain water for later use. Learn about rainwater harvesting and more at Santa Monica's Office of Sustainability and the Environment at: http://www.smgov.net/Departments/OSE/categories/content.aspx?id=3847

Place a +1 if any of the following apply, and then add to Retaining Rainwater Score:

___ The use of rain slopes or grading that direct water flow to flowerbeds
___ One or more rain barrels
___ A rain-water harvesting and retention system
___ Use of permeable paving material on site

Retaining Rainwater Score _____

6) **Pesticides** - Little or no use, including "Rose Systemic" "Weed and Feed", "2 in 1 Protection", "All in Once" and herbicides such as Roundup, help to keep the environment healthy and thus sustainable. Learn integrated pest management techniques at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu

Place a +2 if there is little or no use on site, and then add to Pesticide Use Score:

Pesticide Use Score ____

7) **Fertilizers** – Use limited to no more than 2x/year with slow release fertilizer is preferable. No "Weed & Feed" or "All in One", or "Miracle Grow".

Place a +2 if there is little or no use on site, and then add to Fertilizer Use Score:

Fertilizer Use Score____

8) **Organic Mulch at least 2" deep** – Non-decomposed garden waste such as leaves, bark, twigs, woodchips, pine needles and nutshells improve soil heath as they break down. Apply a 2"-4" layer to impede weed growth and erosion, promote beneficial insects, maintain a steady soil temperature and reduce water evaporation. Keep mulch 2" from small plants, 6" from shrubs and at least 12" from tree trunks. Pick up free tree-trimming mulch at the Manhattan Beach City yard located at 3621 Bell Avenue. For more information call (310) 802-5058.

Place a +2 if there is the proper use of mulch on the site, and then add to Organic Mulch Score:

Organic Mulch Score ____

9) **Vegetables and/or fruits** - Growing your own fruits and vegetables reduces energy consumption by keeping the supply local. To maintain sustainability, these should be grown pesticide-free.

Place a +2 if there is a pesticide-free vegetable garden on site, and then add to Food Production Score:

Food Production Score ____

10) **Compost bin** – Compost is decomposed nutrient-rich organic material that can be worked into the soil or left on the surface like mulch. Combine 50% greens such as fruit and vegetable scraps, grass, plant trimmings, or bread with 50% browns such as nut shells, rinsed eggshells, coffee grounds and tea bags, woodchips, sawdust, tissue and paper towels. DO NOT ADD meat, fish, dairy, bones, diseased plants, invasive weeds or weeds that have gone to seed. Keep moist, but not soggy (like a wrung out sponge) by applying water when needed. To purchase a worm bin (good for small yards) or compost bin, contact Waste Management Inc. at 310 830-7100.

Place a +1 if there is a compost bin on site:

Composting Score _____

Total the score from above to determine your total score:

{15-20 = Excellent, 10-14 = Good, 0-9 = Poor}

Total Sustainable Landscape Audit Score_____