

8 Principles for Regenerative Landscapes



ReScape California is a non-profit organization that educates about and advocates for a whole-systems approach to landscaping that works in harmony with the natural world and addresses the changing environment. ReScape’s landscaping practices are based on 8 regenerative principles which foster soil health, sequester carbon, conserve water and protect habitat and valuable resources while reducing waste and preventing pollution in our communities and watersheds.

Sacramento River Watershed

A watershed is all the land in a region from which rain collects and drains into a common creek, river, lake or bay. The water in a watershed moves across the land and through the storm drain system both underground and on the surface. Water that flows onto streets and into gutters is called urban runoff. On the way to the creeks and rivers, urban runoff picks up pollutants that eventually end up, untreated, in our waterways.

The 27,000 square-mile Sacramento River Watershed drains the Sacramento Valley, the Modoc Plateau, and parts of the Cascade Range and Sierra Nevada Range. This watershed is one of the largest in the United States and covers most of northern California. The Sacramento River carries 31% of the state’s total surface water runoff. The mouth of the Sacramento River is at Suisun Bay near Antioch where it combines with the San Joaquin River, flows into the San Francisco Bay and ultimately meets the Pacific Ocean under the Golden Gate Bridge.

Whether your landscape is next to a creek or miles away, your activities impact the quality of water in the Sacramento River Basin. In healthy landscapes, water from rain or irrigation percolates through soil that is rich in organic matter and alive with organisms. Living soils absorb and retain much of the water while also filtering out pollutants before the water reaches the aquifer or watershed. Incorporating ReScape’s 8 Principles into your landscaping practices will ensure that you are helping to protect the watershed and minimize pollutants that reach the waterways where we live, work and play.



8 Landscape Principles



1. Act Local

Built landscapes are a part of the larger ecosystem of the Sacramento Watershed and they can contribute to its health if designed and maintained using sustainable practices.



2. Reduce Waste

Reduce waste by choosing the right plants, avoiding invasive plant species, using recycled and salvaged products in the landscape, and by composting, mulching and grasscycling plant debris.



3. Nurture Soil

Soils are living ecosystems and when landscape practices allow the soil food web to thrive it can filter pollution, store water, provide plant nutrients and help plants resist pests naturally.



4. Sequester Carbon

Healthy vegetation works together with soil rich in organic matter and beneficial microorganisms to remove carbon dioxide from the air and store it as soil carbon, an important strategy for addressing climate change.



5. Save Water

Creating drought resistant soils, select plants naturally adapted to summer-dry climates, use stormwater, greywater and recycled water in the landscape as much as possible, and use efficient irrigation systems that include self-adjusting, weather-based controllers.



6. Conserve Energy

Reduce the need for mowing and shearing, shade buildings and paved areas, use efficient outdoor lighting, and buy local landscape products.



7. Protect Water & Air

Maximize permeable surfaces and minimize stormwater runoff, use integrated pest management, minimize the use of synthetic pesticides and avoid overuse of fertilizers, reduce fossil fuel consumption, and plant trees to remove CO2 and absorb air pollutants.



8. Create Habitat

By using native plants and increasing the diversity of plant palettes, our built landscape can provide food, water and shelter for birds, butterflies, beneficial insects and other welcome creatures.

Need help? Join ReScape!

Search our directory for a landscape professional trained in ReScape's 8 Principles, or join the regenerative landscape community by becoming a ReScape member.

Details at rescapeca.org

Resources

Calscape Native Plant Nursery Directory. www.calscape.org

California Association of Nurseries & Garden Centers Directory. www.cangc.org

Our Water Our World Eco-Friendly Product Locator. www.ourwaterourworld.org

Regional Water Authority. www.bewatersmart.info

Sacramento River Watershed Program. www.sacriver.org

Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership. www.beriverfriendly.net





Our Nurture Soil principle is rooted in the practice of feeding the soil, not the plant, to encourage a thriving soil food web. The native soil in the Sacramento area has been significantly altered by human activities such as agriculture, urban development and mining. Building healthy soil in your garden starts with assessing the current conditions and determining what the soil needs (a soil test can help).

Simple steps to Nurture Soil

1. Protect the soil from compaction. Create clearly defined paths and or raised beds to prevent compaction and maintain a healthy soil structure that allows water to permeate and soil organisms to thrive.
2. Keep your soil covered with mulch, plants or cover crops to prevent erosion from rain and wind.
3. Amend with compost and sheet mulch. Adding compost improves the soil's water-holding capacity, provides nutrients for plants and feeds the soil web. Sheet mulching can be used to establish a new garden area or remove a lawn without herbicides while enriching the soil.
4. Mulch regularly with organic materials such as chipped plant debris. A 3 inch layer of mulch will slowly decompose, adding organic matter and nutrients to your soil. Avoid the use of nutrient-poor bark mulch or gorilla hair.
5. Feed soils naturally and avoid synthetic, quick release fertilizers. Topdress beds and trees once or twice a year by applying compost around your plants. Avoid quick release fertilizers which can damage soil microbes.

Nurturing Soil protects our watershed

- Choosing organic amendments that feed the soil avoids chemical inputs that can contaminate waterways.
- Storing carbon in the soil helps to mitigate the effects of climate change.
- Increasing the soil's water-holding capacity reduces runoff and prevents sedimentation of streams and stormwater drains.



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UCCE Master Gardeners of Sacramento County. sacmg.ucanr.edu

