

ISLAND SOLUTIONS:  
BEST PRACTICES FOR GARDENING AND LANDSCAPING, PART 2  
BY PROFESSIONAL SAN JUAN COUNTY LANDSCAPERS  
Compiled by Brian Rader, San Juan County

In my position as the 'Pollution Prevention Specialist' for San Juan County, I get to talk with business owners and managers all over San Juan County. Many of these owners and managers have come up with really great 'Island Solutions' to the problems that they face everyday in their businesses. Most recently, I have been working with landscapers, providing technical assistance regarding fuel and chemical handling and storage. As I talked with the landscape professionals, I began compiling some of the really great ideas these folks have regarding how they create all those beautiful landscapes and, at the same time, minimize their negative impact on the environment. Here are some of those 'best practice ideas' from landscape professionals. This is part two of a two part series:

- Always get weeds before they go to seed. This will save you time and frustration next year, too!
- The best way to reduce pesticide use is to make sure you have a healthy soil system and plant the right plants for the moisture and light conditions at your site.
- Consider installing a rain garden in your yard. Properly constructed, a rain garden can help to filter and treat runoff, as well as reduce the volume of runoff water leaving your yard.
- Know what's hazardous on your property. Read labels, follow directions, and mark, store, and dispose of your hazardous waste properly.
- Have cleanup kits on site for spills (gas, oil, fertilizer, herbicides & pesticides).
- Share what you know with your neighbors, it's free.
- Use herbicides sparingly. Where needed, weed patches several times to weaken plants before applying herbicides. Carefully apply herbicides only to weeds. Try to minimize overspray and keep herbicides off of the soil surface where they can persist for a long time.
- Do not over fertilize.
- Use native plants and other landscape features to attract birds to your garden to help with insect control.
- Use mulch liberally to choke out weeds (instead of herbicides), and reduce the need for watering.
- Get educated about our local environment: Eugene Kozloff's book, 'The Plants and Animals of the Pacific Northwest' is a great resource. It may help stimulate your curiosity about the life you see around you.
- Non-lethal slug control: Try using copper pennies around delphiniums to help keep the slugs away. It seems that the copper reacts with the moisture in the

slugs' bodies to deliver a small electric shock. This non-fatal deterrent is enough to encourage the slugs to seek other food sources!

- A great pollution prevention tool: dripless/anti-spill nozzles on all your portable fuel containers. We all know that gas and diesel fuel cans have a tendency to drip and spill when you are awkwardly struggling to pour fuel into a mower or weed-eater. By using these no-drip nozzles, spills and drips are virtually eliminated. Many of these nozzles replace the existing spout on your fuel can, others fit right on to the end of your existing nozzle. There are many varieties available for less than \$10.00 each. Harbor Rentals in Friday Harbor has several in stock. Other hardware stores will likely carry these, as well.

The following landscapers contributed ideas to this project:

- Green Man (Adam & Jason Suhl, 378-4722; 12/19/08)
- Thornbush Landscape & Design (Roger Ellison, 378-2676; 1/6/09)
- Greening and Greening (Marguerite Greening, 376-5363; 1/15/09)
- Green Island Landscape & Design (Sam & Doug Bullock, 376-2773; 1/16/09)
- Cocq's Outdoor Service (Ed LeCocq, 376-2059; 1/16/09)
- Alpine Seaside (Jeff Bossler, 376-5635; 1/22/09)
- Richardson Contracting (Ezra Richardson, 376-3712; 2/5/09)
- Good Earth Works (Patrick Bennett, 376-5653; 2/5/09)
- Island Gardens Company (Jean Turner, 378-5161; 2/13/09)
- Sterlingscapes (Michael Sterling, 376-5129; 2/18/09)
- Kucklick Landscape & Design (Robin Kucklick, 376-2501; 2/18/09)
- Griffin Yard Works (Ron Griffin, 376-4776; 2/24/09)
- All-Season's Gardening (Nancy Jones, 376-2048; 2/25/09)
- Web Landscape Gardening (Wylie Bryant, 378-0987; 2/26/09)
- Grassroots Gardening (Emily Aring, 472-1117; 3/12/09)