

TENNESSEE SMART YARDS - Yardstick

Measure your progress here by checking off the actions you have taken towards a Tennessee Smart Yard.
 Accumulate 36 inches worth of actions to be eligible to certify your yard as a Tennessee Smart Yard (<https://tiny.utk.edu/tnsyardstick>).



[tnyards.utk.edu](https://tiny.utk.edu)

	Your Inches	Inch Value	Action	Date Completed / Notes
Right Plant, Right Place		2	Determine your family's landscape objectives and level of maintenance desired.	
		2	Assess yard site conditions and incorporate into sketch.	
		2	Sketch your yard including long-term goals.	
		2	Group plants according to site conditions and maintenance needs.	
		2	Remove or avoid using invasive/exotic plants and incorporate native plants.	
		2	Preserve existing vegetation, especially trees, during land disturbance activities.	
Manage Soils & Mulch		2	Assess and address soil compaction.	
		2	Maintain a 2-3 inch layer of mulch in plant beds and over tree and shrub roots, leaving at least 2 inches of space at the base of trunks.	
		2	Use organic pine straw, pine bark leaves, or hardwood mulch.	
		2	Protect all soil surfaces with vegetation to minimize erosion by rainfall and runoff.	
Water Efficiently		2	Use rain gauge to help monitor plant water needs; apply about one inch of water per week, taking into account rainfall.	
		2	Use rain barrels to catch rooftop runoff.	
		2	Adjust sprinkler heads to avoid hitting paved surfaces and calibrate the output as directed by plant needs.	
		2	Mow grass high, creating deeper root systems and reducing water needs.	
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle		2	Leave grass clippings on lawn.	
		2	Use composted grass clippings, leaves, pruned plant parts, kitchen scraps to improve soils.	
		2	Locate plants to increase home energy efficiency.	
		2	Use landscape waste on site.	
		2	Incorporate salvaged materials into landscaping.	

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Fertilize Appropriately		2	Maintain soil pH in the recommended range.	
		2	Fertilize as recommended by soil test and not in wet weather; use low maintenance plans when available.	
Manage Yard Pests		2	Check for pests regularly to detect and determine problems that require intervention.	
		2	Use mechanical approaches to pest control such as pruning and hand removal.	
		2	Protect beneficial insects that control pests and support pollination.	
		2	Spot treat only affected areas, avoiding routine applications of pesticides.	
		2	Use environmentally-friendly pesticides such as horticultural oils and insecticidal soaps.	
Provide for Wildlife		2	Incorporate plants that support habitat needs of desired wildlife.	
		2	Provide a water source.	
		2	Install bat houses, bird houses, bird feeders, etc.	
Protect Waters Edge		2	Maintain a mix of native trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers along water's edge, creating a vegetated width that is as wide as practical.	
		2	Create "no mow, no fertilizer, no pesticide" zones along waterways.	
Reduce Stormwater & Pollutants		2	Disconnect downspouts, directing them onto a lawn or garden rather than into drainage channels or onto impervious surfaces.	
		3	Build a rain garden to catch and filter stormwater runoff.	
		3	Use permeable surfaces for hardscapes such as driveways, walkways or patios.	
		2	Practice good housekeeping (e.g. sweep impervious surface, "scoop the poop," wash car on lawn instead of driveway).	
		Total Inches Accumulated (36 inches = a smart yard!)		Certify your yard at https://tiny.utk.edu/tnsyardstick