

# The use of turf and no-mow grasses in sustainable landscape design

What is sustainable?

Jodie Sheffield, Research and Development



Christine Talbot, Landscape Architect

**QUADRIGA**  
landscape architecture and planning, inc. sacramento | santa rosa

“A whole systems approach to gardening and landscaping that works to support the integrity of one of California’s key ecosystems- The Sacramento River watershed”

**7 PRINCIPLES:**

- Landscape locally
- Landscape for less to the landfill
- Nurture the soil
- Conserve water
- Conserve energy
- Protect Water and Air Quality
- Create and protect wildlife habitat

**River Friendly Landscaping is:**

- Select the right location/Limit the amount
- Proper Soil Preparation
- Choose the right drought tolerant varieties
- Use efficient irrigation practices
- Reduce or eliminate the use for pesticides, herbicides and fertilization

*"Traditional turfgrass doesn't waste water, people do"*

**Turfgrass=sustainable ?**



**Purpose?**



**Right Choice?**





**Better Choices**



**Appropriate for use**





**Multi family**



# Turfgrass alternatives for urban and passive landscapes

- Native Bentgrass – mowed
- Buffalo Grass – mowed
- Mow free blends and Native options
- Seeding vs sod

**Alternatives to the traditional**

- *"You need to put on a new pair of glasses when you look at California Native Sod, This is not the traditional lawn of our Childhood. We are entering a new era where the complex beauty of native grasses needs to be appreciated" Ed Zuckerman, President DBG*





**Dwarf fescue vs native bentgrass**



Educating your Clients-  
planning the expected aesthetic will  
influence annual cultural practices:

- to mow or not to mow – decide before you plant
- water management
- nutrients

**What To Expect - Educate**



**Slopes**



**Adjacent to natural areas**





**Edges and moderate foot traffic**

- Water Quality Applications
  - Bioswales
  - Storm water basins
  - Erosion control
  - Riparian restoration
  - Dispersal fields





**Water quality swales**







**Runoff areas**



PEOPLE ARE UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THESE SOD FORMS ARE INSTALLED BECAUSE OF THEIR WATER CONSERVING CHARACTERISTICS; HOWEVER THEY MORE IMPORTANTLY SAVE THE PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE.

*"Small motors on lawn mowers often produce the same emissions in one hour of operation that moderately fuel efficient automobiles emit in driving them over 350 miles. Edgers and blowers are even worse creating the same emissions in one hour that the car would travelling 1000 miles. This carbon fact is much more significant for our environment."*

Ken Coverdell  
Owner, Blue Sky Designs Inc.



Regulations on small engine emissions have made some improvement to air quality, but reduction of gas powered engine use is crucial for long term sustainability.

# What is sustainable ?



- Designer, owner, installer and maintenance all work together
- Maintainable
  - Water / nutrients / microclimate
  - Equipment
  - Manpower
- Meets owners need



**What is sustainable ?**

For more information

[www.deltabluegrass.com](http://www.deltabluegrass.com)

Sign up for more information at the Delta  
Bluegrass table