



Clean Creek Challenge
City of Austin
P.O. Box 1088 - WPDR
Austin, TX 78767

Place
Postage
Here



Your Challenge...

To protect and improve Austin's environmental resources

The Game...

This booklet provides actions you can take to help protect our environment. When you adopt earth-wise practices and make them a habit, you earn credits. You can then record your total credits on each page and transfer that score to the postcard on the last page of the booklet. Once you've earned 75 credits, you win a prize, but more importantly, you become a

green neighbor!

If 30% of your neighbors join you in protecting Austin's environment or have earned 50 credits in the neighborhood challenge, you all become a

green neighborhood!



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Key

Benefits

	Reduces your carbon footprint – the release of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere	Climate Protection and Air Quality
	Reduces water use and/or pollutants in our waterways	Water Conservation and Water Quality Protection
	Reduces, recycles and reuses natural resources	Resource Conservation Reduced Waste in our Landfills

I'm a Green Neighbor!

Fill out this postcard or apply online at www.cityofaustin.org/watershed/greenneighbor/ to receive your prize for becoming a Green Neighbor!

We are a Green Neighborhood!

Fill out this postcard or apply online at www.cityofaustin.org/watershed/greenneighbor/ to receive your prize for becoming a Green Neighborhood!

Green Neighbor Credits

- Total Car Care Credits _____
- Total Transportation Credits _____
- Total Energy Credits _____
- Total Water Use Credits _____
- Fertilizer & Pesticide Credits _____
- Total Green Garden Credits _____
- Total Wildlife Habitat Credits _____
- Total Compost Credits _____
- Total Pet Care Credits _____
- Total Waste Reduction Credits _____
- Total Toxic Chemical Credits _____
- Total Sediment Credits _____
- TOTAL CREDITS** _____

(need at least 75 credits to win)

- Distribute Green Neighbor packets (required) _____
- Invite an environmental expert to speak _____
- Sponsor Stormdrain Marking _____
- Create a Demonstration Yard _____
- Recognize Award-Winning Green Gardens _____
- Hang a Scoop the Poop box _____
- Sponsor a Creek Cleanup _____
- Adopt-a-Park _____
- Prepare a history of your creek(s) _____
- Gather photos of your creek _____
- Sponsor a Tree Planting _____
- TOTAL CREDITS** _____

(need at least 50 credits to win)

Green Neighbor Prizes!

Choose either prize A OR prize B

A. T-Shirt (one per family member)

Men's
sm____ m____ lg____ xl____ xxl____

Children's
sm____ m____ lg____

B. Pass to Barton Springs Pool _____

(Fill in number of family members)

Adult____ Junior____ Child____
(over17) (age 15-17) (under 15)

Contact Information

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

Neighborhood Name _____

Green Neighborhood Prizes!

Check any or all boxes

- Council Proclamation for Neighborhood Association or Subdivision
- Web Site Recognition
- Recognition in Austin Energy Newsletter
- 2-hour Landscape Design Consultation for neighborhood common area
- Green Neighborhood signs for posting in neighborhood
- Scoop the Poop Box (neighborhood maintained)
- Neighborhood Tree Giveaway

Contact Information

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

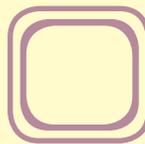
Neighborhood Name _____

If 30% of your neighborhood become Green Neighbors, you automatically qualify as a Green Neighborhood!

Green Neighbor Credits

Distribute Green Neighbor packets for the entire neighborhood (required)	15
Sponsor a Stormdrain Marking Event: www.cityofaustin.org/watershed/wq_stormdrain	10
Recognize Award-Winning Green Gardens www.cityofaustin.org/greengarden/awgg	10
Invite an environmental expert to speak at a homeowners meeting	8
Call the City of Austin for and energy audit of your home	12
Hire an earth-wise landscape professional for common areas (www.growgreen.org/downloads/hiring.pdf)	10
Purchase and hang a Scoop the Poop box in your neighborhood park or central location - (Call 974-2550)	6
Sponsor a Creek Cleanup through Keep Austin Beautiful - (Call 391-0617)	8
Adopt-a-Park (www.cityofaustin.org/parks/volunteer.htm)	10
Prepare a history or photo documentation of your creek(s)	12
Sponsor a neighborhood Tree Planting through NeighborWoods - (Call 440-5179)	10
If 30% of your neighborhood become Green Neighbors, you automatically qualify as a Green Neighborhood!	50

Circle your credits and total your neighborhood's score
(Need at least 50 points to win)



Total Credits

Why Become a Green Neighbor (or a Green Neighborhood)?

We are all connected through our eco-system. We share water to drink, to grow our food, for recreation and for wildlife habitat. We depend on clean air to breathe and renewable energy to power our homes, businesses and vehicles.

The Green City Challenge encourages you to learn how you can do your share to reduce your carbon footprint, protect our natural resources, and reduce waste. The benefits of these individual actions done at the local level can also reduce our impact on global warming.

This is a guide for actions you can take – some simple, some more difficult – that will help us preserve, or better yet, improve Austin's environment for us and for generations to come.

Complete the challenge and you will be rewarded with prizes for helping out, but more importantly, you will be rewarded with clean and plentiful resources.

GreenCity Challenge

Become a Green Neighbor!

Object of the Challenge

Adopt earth-wise habits to improve and protect Austin's environmental resources

Who Can Play?

Individuals or households

Rules of the Challenge

Read through all the sections of the booklet and tally your credits for each earth-wise activity that you've made a "habit".

How to Collect Your Prize!

When you've reached the goal of 75 points earned, YOU WIN! Just fill out the Green Neighbor postcard on the last page of the booklet and mail it to us!

Want to Learn More about Becoming a Green City? Visit the Austin Public Library:

Energy

- ♦ **Asphalt Nation : How the Automobile Took over America, and How We Can Take It Back** by Jane Holtz Kay, 303.4832 KA
- ♦ **The Citizen-Powered Energy Handbook** by Greg Pahl, 333.79 PA
- ♦ **Got Sun? Go Solar** by Rex A. Ewing and Doug Pratt, 697.78 EW
- ♦ **Human Impacts on Weather and Climate** by William R. Cotton and Roger Peilke, Sr., 551.6 CO
- ♦ **Who Killed the Electric Car?** by Chris Paine, DVD, 629.2293 WH

Gardening

- ♦ **Bring Nature Home: How to Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens** by Douglas W. Tallamy
- ♦ **Dam Nation** by Cleo Woelfe-Erskine, 553.7 DA
- ♦ **Native Texas Plants: Landscaping Region by Region** by Sally & Andy Wasowski, 635.951764 WA
- ♦ **Rodale's Chemical-free Yard & Garden: The Ultimate Authority on Successful Organic Gardening** by Carr, Anna, 635.04584 RO
- ♦ **Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife** by Kelley Bender and Noreen Damude
- ♦ **The Tree** by Colin Tudge, 582.16 TU
- ♦ **Xeriscape for Central Texas** by Xeriscape Garden Club, 712 XE
- ♦ **Slow Food Nation** by Carlo Petrini, 641.302 PET

Building

- ♦ **Building Green** by Clarke Snell, 690.837 SN
- ♦ **The New Ecological Home** by Daniel Chiras, 690.8 CH

Nature

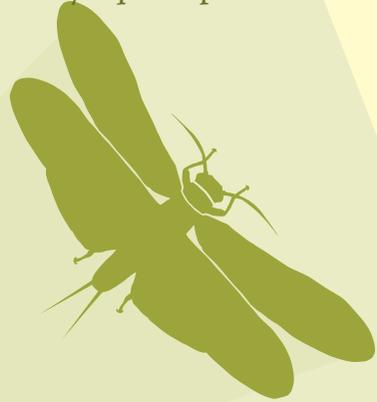
- ♦ **Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-deficit Disorder** by Richard Louv, 155.418 LO
- ♦ **Texas: The State of Springs** by Texas Parks and Wildlife, DVD 333.91 TE

Books for Kids:

- ♦ **Endangered Planet** by David Burnie, J 333.95 BU
- ♦ **Home, and Other Big, Fat Lies** by Jill Wolfson, J FIC WOL
- ♦ **Seedfolks** by Paul Fleischman, Y FIC FLE
- ♦ **Teaching Green: The Elementary Years** by Tim Grant, 372.2570
- ♦ **Uno's Garden** by Graeme Base, E FIC BAS
- ♦ **View from the Oaks: The Private World of Other Creatures** by Judith and Herbert Kohl, J 591.028 KO
- ♦ **Where Once There Was a Wood** by Denise Fleming, E FIC FLE

Sediment

Dirt carried to creeks by stormwater runoff and erosion can kill fish eggs and larvae, damage the gills of mature fish and destroy spawning habitat. Suspended sediment can block the light needed by aquatic plant life.



Sediment is the most common pollutant in Austin's creeks

For every inch of soil lost on a one-acre construction site, 170 tons of sediment choke our waterways

Stabilize Steep Slopes

Plant a hardy groundcover to reduce erosion and increase water penetration into the soil	1
Build terraces or a retaining wall	1
Till vegetable rows across a slope, rather than up and down	1

Monitor Construction Sites

Call 974-2922 to report a construction site without erosion control devices	1
---	---

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page



Total Credits

GreenCity Challenge

Become a Green Neighborhood!

Object of the Challenge

Partner with others and adopt earth-wise habits to improve Austin's environment

Who Can Play?

Streets, Neighborhood Associations, Campuses, Businesses, Civic or Religious Groups

Rules of the Challenge

If 30% of your neighborhood becomes Green Neighbors, YOU WIN! Or if you earn 50 credits on the Green Neighborhood Challenge (page 26), YOU WIN!

How to Collect Your Prize!

When you've reached the goal, mail us the Green Neighborhood postcard on the last page of the booklet to receive your prizes!

Car Care

Rainfall can wash motor vehicle fluids off roads and parking lots to our stormdrains where they travel untreated to our creeks. Gasoline, antifreeze, battery acid, brake fluid and motor oil are all poisonous to fish and other forms of aquatic life. A poorly maintained car can also degrade air quality.

Two ounces of antifreeze can kill a dog, one teaspoon can kill a cat, 2 tablespoons a child, and 3 ounces can kill an adult

Car Fluids

Never dispose of car fluids on the ground, in the trash, or in a stormdrain	2
Recycle your motor oil, drained oil filters, spent solvents, used antifreeze and car batteries (most commercial establishments recycle)	2
Use drip pans to catch leaking or drained fluids	2
If spills occur, clean them up immediately with sorbent material (clay, kitty litter, sawdust, shop rags) and dispose of the waste in the trash	1

Car Washing

Take your car to a commercial car wash where detergents and other contaminants are collected and sent to be treated	1
If you wash your car at home, skip the detergents and use only water	1
Wash your car on an unpaved area, (or one that flows to an unpaved area) to prevent wastewater from flowing into the street	2
Use a spray nozzle (not an open hose) to reduce water use and runoff into the street	1

The oil from a single automobile engine can produce an eight-acre oil slick

For more car care tips and recycling locations, visit www.cityofaustin.org/watershed/shadetree.htm

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page

Total Credits

Halt the Hazards!

Buy least-toxic household chemicals or make your own (recommendations can be found at www.cityofaustin.org/sws/hhwcleaners.htm)	2
Store hazardous materials in their original containers in cool, secure, dry areas out of reach of children and pets	1
Replace disposable batteries with rechargeable ones and recycle old batteries	2
Buy only the amount of chemicals that you need or share leftovers with neighbors	1
Take your excess household hazardous waste to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility at 2514 Business Center Drive in south Austin (Call 974-4343 for info)	2
Rinse empty cleaners and pesticide containers and use the rinse water the same way you would the product. Empty containers can be recycled	1

If you smoke, dispose of your cigarette butts in ashtrays

1

Paint the Town Green!

Never rinse painting equipment where the rinse water can run into the storm drain or waterway	1
For Latex Paint	
Pour leftover paint into an absorbent material such as shredded newspaper or kitty litter. Allow paint to dry completely. Dispose of dry paint in the trash	2
Wash paint brushes and other equipment in your household sink so that the wastewater goes to the sanitary sewer for treatment (Not for septic tank owners)	1
For Oil-Based Paint	
Use paint thinners, turpentine and mineral spirits to wash equipment, then reuse them to prevent unnecessary disposal	1
Take excess paint to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility	2
Never pour unwanted paint or chemicals on the ground where they may contaminate runoff or groundwater. Empty containers should be thrown in the trash	1

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page

Total Credits

Toxic Chemicals

Household chemicals, such as bathroom and oven cleaners, furniture polish and bug spray, can be harmful to our water if disposed of improperly. Many chemicals can harm our drinking water if poured down the drain.

Toxic chemicals discarded in the trash can cause fires, harm sanitation workers and pollute groundwater

Doing more for clean air... Austin's smoking ban in public places has reduced fine particle air pollution in local bars by 94% since 2005

Americans smoke over 470 billion cigarettes annually which means that more than 175 million lbs. of slow-to-degrade and toxin-filled cigarette butts either fill our landfills or wash into our creeks

Austin's Household Hazardous Waste Facility has collected more than 10,400,000 lbs. of waste since 1986 - 1/3 or 3,650,000 lbs. have been recycled



Things to Drop Off at the Hazardous Waste Facility

- Paints and Solvents
- Lawn Care Chemicals
- Cleaning Products
- Pool Chemicals
- Automotive Products
- Batteries
- Fluorescent Bulbs (CFL's)

Call 974-4343 for details

The City's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility recycles good quality latex paint into latex primer that is used by community groups and organizations for civic projects.

Transportation Options

Gas-guzzling cars not only increase our dependence on crude oil and reduce our limited supply, but they also harm our air quality and increase greenhouse gas emissions.

Vehicle

- | | |
|---|----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go easy on the brakes and avoid hard accelerations • Reduce time spent idling • Unload unnecessary items in your trunk to reduce weight | 2 |
|---|----------|

Maintain your vehicle and check your tire pressure regularly to improve fuel economy by up to 3%	1
--	----------

Don't top-off your gas tank – stop at the click and tighten the cap	1
---	----------

Refuel after 6:00 p.m.	1
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Don't drive alone – carpool instead	3
-------------------------------------	----------

Sell your car or downsize to a smaller vehicle – if you've already done it, take credit!	10
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Walk, Bike or Bus

Ride your bike, carpool, take the bus or walk to work or school at least once per week	2
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Ride your bike, carpool, take the bus or walk to work or school daily	10
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Shop Locally

Make it a habit to walk or bike to your neighborhood stores at least twice a week	2
---	----------

Buy local and support area farmers to reduce the carbon emissions from food transport	1
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Switch to a more fuel-efficient car. Every mile per gallon gained reduces your carbon emission by one pound

Want to learn more? Visit **Capital Metro** (www.capmetro.org) **River City Rideshare** (www.rcride.com) or the **Bicycle Pedestrian Program** (www.cityofaustin.org/bicycle)

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page



Total Credits



Energy Savings

The cheapest and cleanest energy is the energy not used. More than 70% of carbon or greenhouse gas emissions are the result of electric energy use in our homes and commercial buildings. Make your homes and buildings as energy efficient as possible to help reduce your carbon footprint.

If every American home replaced just one light bulb with a compact fluorescent bulb (CFL), the reduction in greenhouse gasses would be equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars

A recent energy efficiency upgrade project at the airport will reduce electrical consumption by 12% annually

Change out your night lighting to LEDs – not only do bright lights use a lot of energy, they also cause light pollution of the night sky, affecting animals and sky observations

Call 877-549-2774 toll free and ask for a free programmable thermostat from Austin Energy to adjust your room temperature automatically

Tune up your air conditioner to save up to 220 pounds of carbon and \$14 per year

Building a new house? Build (or remodel) it green – it can save nearly 1500 kilowatt hours per year

Want to learn more about how to reduce your carbon footprint? Visit www.CoolAustin.org

Contacts for Illegal Dumping

Pollutants and Trash (stormdrains or waterways)	24-Hour Pollution Hotline 974-2550
Bulky Items obstructing waterways	Drainage Hotline 3-1-1
Residences and Vacant Lots	Solid Waste Hotline 3-1-1

About 20% of the waste generated by Texans comes from grass clippings, leaves and other yard trimmings

It only takes an hour for one person to clean up trash along 50' of creek

Dispose of lawn clippings with brush collection or in compost piles – never in creeks or storm drains	2
Recycle newspapers, magazines, catalogs, junk mail, office paper, aluminum cans, steel cans, glass bottles and jars, plastic bottles (#1 and #2) and corrugated cardboard	2
Bring reusable bags to carry purchases home instead of using plastic and paper ones	2
Purchase bulk items and fewer packaged products	1
Take a trash bag with you while hiking (pack it in, pack it out)	2
Pick up trash in your neighborhood or park	1
Organize a creek clean-up (Call Keep Austin Beautiful at 391-0169 for help)	2

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page



Total Credits

Adopt-a-Creek or Street. Call Keep Austin Beautiful at 391-0619 for more information.

Waste Reduction

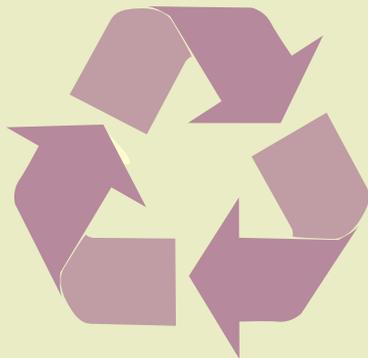
Trash is the largest and most visible urban stream pollutant. Trash can change habitats for aquatic life, reducing oxygen and physically damaging fish, birds and other animals. It also causes creeks to look less attractive and uninviting.

Because glass takes so long to decompose, the bottle you throw away today might still be littering our waterways in the year 3000

Austin-area residents generate enough trash to fill the Erwin Center every four months

Recycling 54 billion aluminum cans is the equivalent of taking 2400 cars off the road

In 1999 recycling and composting prevented about 64 million tons of materials from ending up in landfills and incinerators. Today, the US recycles more than 32% of its waste – double the amount of 15 years ago



About 600 pine trees are saved each day through Austin's recycling efforts

For more information about recycling, visit www.cityofaustin.org/sws/recycling.htm

Air Conditioner and Heater

Set your thermostat at 68 degrees or lower in the winter and 78 degrees or higher in the summer	2
Adjust your air conditioning and heating system temperature to save energy when you're away for the day and when you are sleeping at night	1
Change your air filters every month	1
Look for air filters with a MERV rating of six or higher	1
Tune-up your heating and air conditioning system annually	2
Have your duct work tested for leakage. Austin Energy offers a \$50 rebate per air conditioning duct test	2
Use ceiling fans in occupied rooms	1

Choose Green

Eliminate a major portion of your carbon footprint by switching to Green Choice , Austin Energy's popular, renewable energy program	6
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Appliances and Lighting

Use plug strips or unplug appliances like TVs, DVD players, stereos and cell phone chargers when not in use. This "phantom load" accounts for up to 40% of all electricity used for home electronics	1
Replace standard light bulbs with compact fluorescents in the five fixtures you use the most	1
Use your microwave – they consume 70% less energy than an electric stove or oven	2
Select ENERGY STAR appliances, thermostats and lighting	2

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page



Total Credits

Visit www.austinenergy.com for Green Choice and other energy saving tips and rebates

Water Use

As the city's population continues to grow, so does the demand for water. To delay the costly expansion of our water treatment facilities and to ensure our continued long-term water supply, please help out by conserving water.

Watering deeply and allowing the soil to dry out between waterings encourages deeply rooted plants that are more drought resistant

Austin homeowners use an average of 8500 gallons of water per month in the winter, and 12,000 gallons of water per month in the summer

The average per person water use in a conserving household is 50 gallons per day – it's 70 gallons per day in a non-conserving

Soaker hoses and trickle irrigation reduce runoff and are 20% more efficient than sprinklers

During the summer months, over 50% of residential water is used on landscapes

Use low-flow faucets and shower heads	2
Replace old large capacity toilets with new water-efficient models	2
Buy high efficiency dishwashers and clothes washers	1
Take five minute showers instead of baths and avoid letting faucets run unnecessarily (e.g., when brushing teeth)	1
Repair leaking faucets, toilets, and pumps	1
If you have a dishwasher, do not hand-wash dishes – even running partial dishwasher loads can reduce water and energy consumption	1

If you don't own a dog...	4
If you own a dog or cat...	
Scoop the poop and: • Flush it • Toss it in the trash, or • Bury it (at least 6" deep and away from gardens and water sources)	2
Put a Scoop the Poop sign in your yard to encourage neighbors to clean up (Call 974-2550 for your sign)	2
Notify the Parks and Recreation Department at 974-6700 if the Scoop the Poop box in your City park is empty	1

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page



Total Credits



The City of Austin's pet waste ordinance:

DEFECATION BY DOGS OR CATS

It shall be unlawful for any person to fail to promptly remove and dispose of, in a sanitary manner, feces left by a dog or cat being handled by that person on property, public or private, other than the premises of the owner or handler of such dog or cat.

Maximum Fine: \$500

Visit www.waterwiseaustin.org for tips and rebates for water conservation

Pet Care

Stormwater carries pet waste to our waterways. While the sight and smell are unpleasant, pet waste is also a health risk to pets and people, especially children. Like human waste, animal waste may contain harmful bacteria and viruses, making the water unfit for irrigation, recreation, or other uses. Pet waste also contains nutrients that accelerate the growth of nuisance algae. Algae can be harmful to aquatic life because it robs the water of oxygen.

Less than one teaspoon of pet waste could contaminate an Olympic-size pool

Look for Mutt Mitt dispensers in your City park to make scooping the poop easier



Scoop the Poop

Cleaner Streets, Creeks & Feet!

Learn more about picking up after your pet
www.scoopthepoopaustin.org

Find us on Facebook!



Mandatory Watering Schedule (5/1 - 9/30)

If you must water...

- Don't water more than two times per week:
 Odd addresses - Wednesday and Saturday
 Even addresses - Thursday and Sunday
- Water before 10 am and after 7 pm
- Hand-water any time

If you don't water your yard...

6



Know your water.SM

Learn more about conserving your water.
 Visit www.austin.wateriq.org

Outdoor Water Use

When watering your landscape, use enough water to moisten soil to a depth of 4-6", then let soil dry before you water again	3
Adjust automatic irrigation systems seasonally	2
Separate planting beds from turf areas on your irrigation system	1
Use drip irrigation or soaker hoses in plant and flower beds	1
Monitor automatic irrigation systems regularly for broken heads that need replacement	1
Install rain shut-off devices on automated irrigation systems	1
Add Dillo Dirt or other compost to soil before planting new turf or planting beds to increase moisture-holding capacity	1

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page



Total Credits

Green Gardening

A green garden is one that is not only attractive, but also earth-wise. It includes the environmentally-sound use of landscape chemicals and equipment, appropriate watering, and reduced and/or reused gardening waste.

About 20,000 tons of yard waste was diverted from the landfill through curbside recycling in 2007

Plants and grass located in the shade take 25% less water than those in the sun

If you have a native or natural yard that requires little to no water or chemicals

4

Yard Care Basics

Make sure you have 6-8" of quality soil before planting turf or shrubs	2
Plant native, adapted, and non-invasive plants and trees – they require less water and are naturally resistant to pests and diseases (see Plants at www.growgreen.org)	1
Plant shade trees on the south and west sides of your property	2
Put the right plant in the right place – shade-loving plants in the shade, sun-loving in the sun, etc.	1
Plant St. Augustine grass only in the shade	1
Top-dress your lawn with 1/4 to 1/2 inch of compost or Dillo Dirt each year to add nutrients and reduce water needs	1
Cover planting beds with at least 2" of mulch at all times (but just 1" around trees)	1
Mow high to encourage a deep-rooted, healthy turf	1
Use paper instead of plastic bags for yard waste and leave them at the curb	1

Think your yard is an award-winning Green Garden? Let us know! Visit www.cityofaustin.org/greengarden

Compost

What is Compost?

Compost is decomposed organic material such as food scraps, grass clippings, leaves, and wood and brush chips.

Why Compost?

- Reduces the amount of organic material going to the landfill (saves vehicle pollution as well as landfill space)
- Improves soil by providing nutrients naturally
- Improves soil structure by breaking up tightly bound particles in clay or silt
- Conserves water by increasing soil's ability to retain water
- Reuses our natural resources

What Can I Compost?

YES

Grass Clippings
Yard Trimmings
Leaves
Vegetable and Fruit Scraps
Coffee Grounds
Shredded Paper

NO

Meat or Fish
Fats, Grease or Oil
Dairy Products
Pet Feces
Invasive Weeds
Non-Organic Materials

Compost

Compost home yard trimmings and acceptable food scraps

3

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page

Total Credits

For details on composting visit www.austinrecycles.com

Wildlife Habitat

Watching wildlife in action can be fun and relaxing for everyone as you attract songbirds, butterflies, and frogs to your yard. A wildlife habitat can also help restore the natural ecosystem that was destroyed when your home was built. Gardening practices that benefit wildlife also reduce the use of chemicals, conserve water and energy and can help improve air and soil quality.

Habitat loss is the number one threat to wildlife

Studies show that children who spend time in nature are more creative and less hyperactive



For more information about Wildlife Austin, visit www.keeptaustinwild.com

Encourage Wildlife

Certify your backyard as a wildlife habitat (www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife)	5
Plant native plant species that produce berries, nuts or fruit	2
Provide a continuous source of water for wildlife	2
Keep a wildlife log of visiting animals	1
Locate and visit a nature preserve to view habitat or learn more at www.cityofaustin.org/water/wildland or www.cityofaustin.org/parks/preserves.htm	1

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page



Total Credits

Keep Water on Your Property

Plant or mulch any bare spots to prevent erosion and weeds and reduce water needs	1
For pathways and patios, use materials like gravel, crushed granite, tumbled glass or wood chips to allow water to soak into the ground	2
Install rain barrels to collect rainwater from rooftops and gutters to reuse on the property (www.cityofaustin.org/watercon/rbsales.htm)	2
Create a rain garden to catch and store rainfall for short periods of time (www.growgreen.org/downloads/landscaping.pdf)	2
Create berms or swales to keep water from running off the land	1

Save Our Air!

Use an electric or battery-powered mower instead of gas-powered	3
Sweep yard debris rather than using a leaf blower	1

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page



Total Credits

The City of Austin produces 40 million pounds of Dillo Dirt annually. This rich compost is made from a combination of biosolids from wastewater and yard trimmings



Calculate how water quality savvy you are at www.cityofaustin.org/watershed/watermark.htm



Fertilizers

Nutrients from fertilizers help our plants grow, but can also cause excessive growth of algae and aquatic weeds when washed into our waterways. These can rob the water of oxygen and harm fish. Too much nitrate in our drinking water can also cause serious health problems, particularly in newborn babies.

If You Don't Fertilize

4

The weed killer, atrazine, which is found in most weed and feed products has been detected in over 70% of Austin's monitored springs

Did you know that homeowners use more pounds of landscaping chemicals per acre than farmers?



Fertilize Wisely

Reduce turf areas to use less water, fewer chemicals and cut maintenance time	3
Don't Bag It! Leave grass clippings on the lawn to return nutrients and beneficial organic material to the soil naturally and reduce waste in our landfills	1
If you don't bag grass clippings, use half as much fertilizer, half as often as listed on the bag	2
Choose Dillo Dirt, other compost, or natural/organic fertilizers - they are naturally slow release	2
Sweep excess fertilizer from sidewalks and driveways back onto your lawn to prevent nutrient runoff	1
Never fertilize before a rain. Rain can wash fertilizer from your lawn to the stormdrain, where it travels into the nearest creek	2

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page



Total Credits

Pesticides

More than 95% of insects are not pests. In fact, many help us out by eating the pests. Many pesticides kill most bugs they come in contact with, not just the harmful ones. Scientists are also finding pesticides and herbicides in our creeks and groundwater, where they can harm aquatic life.

Diazinon, now banned by the EPA, has been detected in Barton Creek at four times the level known to harm aquatic life

DDT and chlordane (pesticides banned in the 1970's) are still present in sediments in Town Lake

Don't Be Toxic

Eliminate routine pest and fertilizer treatments - identify problems first and treat accordingly	2
Avoid using synthetic weed and feed products - the best time to use a weed killer is NOT usually the best time to fertilize	2
Monitor your yard weekly for pest problems so you can "nip them in the bud"	1
Try non-chemical solutions to pest problems FIRST - use least-toxic pesticides only as a last resort (visit www.growgreen.org/insects.htm)	1
Use weed barriers in beds to prevent unsightly weeds	2

If you've made it a habit, circle your credits and total your score for this page



Total Credits

For complete earth-wise yard care tips, look for Grow Green fact sheets at your nursery or home improvement center or visit www.growgreen.org

For more pesticide facts, visit www.smartwaterways.org/facts/USGS_Fact_WQ.pdf

