



Summer Is Here To Stay!

June in Chicagoland means long walks by the lake, concerts, and backyard parties. When it's time to unwind in between summertime activities, your backyard garden can be a great place to kick your feet up and enjoy the sunshine.

In this round of Nature's Notes, we'll discuss tips on how to maintain a sustainable garden, from composting to rainwater harvesting. We'll also take a closer look at an award winning lakefront property.

Looking for help in the garden this summer? Call us at [847-475-7917](tel:847-475-7917) or submit an inquiry through our online [contact form](#) to get started.



Our Guide To Sustainable Gardening Practices

Gardening can be a lot of work: weeding, pruning, pinching, deadheading, fertilizing... the list goes on and on. Maybe there's a way to work smarter, not harder. Let's look at some options:



Composting

This is an easy way to get higher yields out of your garden. Fruit and vegetable scraps, eggshells, and most yard waste can become rich, fertile soil for your garden. It requires a little effort, but that effort goes a long way.

Crop Rotation

Even easier than composting, you can give your garden more nutrients by simply changing up your planting layout each year. Garden crops all have specific nutrient requirements, and if you keep planting the same crops in the same spots, they will quickly deplete the soil of those nutrients, leading to smaller and smaller yields.

It's important to note that a lot of garden crops are related, so rotating between broccoli and cabbage, for example, would have little impact on maximizing soil nutrients, whereas rotating between broccoli and peas would. Crops in the bean family (Fabaceae) have a special ability to

take in Nitrogen from the air and put it into the soil. You can take advantage of this process of Nitrogen fixation by rotating your bean and pea crops around the garden.



Rainwater Collection

Home rainwater collection systems can be simple and cheap. A system as simple as a barrel with a screen and hose attached to the gutter can do the trick. At the Nature's Perspective Landscaping office, we use a rainwater collection system to funnel all the water that falls on the roof into a storage tank, where we then use it to irrigate our nursery. For rainwater collection guidelines, [click here](#).

Rainwater Gardens

While we're on the topic of rain, let's talk about another great use for all that water. The goal of a rain garden is to utilize runoff from the roof, driveway, etc., to irrigate a garden, usually consisting of native plants. These gardens can be large or small, simple or complex, but the idea is to create something that fits your needs and benefits the environment.

Rain gardens can provide better drainage for your yard, cleaner water for the environment, and a habitat for pollinators, birds, and beneficial insects. If you're interested in creating a garden like this in your yard, you can [click here](#) to contact us, and we'd be happy to help!



Leaf Mulch

Looking ahead to fall, here's another sustainability tip that can also save you a lot of time and energy. It can be pretty overwhelming to wake up on a cold autumn morning to see your yard heavily blanketed with leaves. Raking them up is a lot of work, but you don't actually need to.

Instead of raking, consider mowing over the leaves to break them up. This will allow your grass to "breathe" while the leaves break down and release nutrients into the soil. Your grass will look much happier in the spring, and you won't need as much fertilizer. If you end up with a lot of leaf mulch, consider using some in your compost or spreading it over your garden and flower beds.



Pollinator Plants

If your garden is looking sad or your harvests aren't as plentiful as you'd like, there's a good chance you're lacking pollinators. Beneficial insects and birds are abundant in the environment, but they need a reason to come to your yard. If you devote a little of your garden space to these critters, they'll pollinate your vegetables for you and take care of some of those pesky bugs like aphids or mites.

Caring for a garden can be therapeutic and rewarding, especially when you minimize your inputs and maximize your outputs. If you want to create a sustainable garden that works for you and your needs, click [here](#) to talk with one of our designers about getting your dream garden in the ground. Happy planting!

Have a question about garden sustainability practices? Give us a call!

847-475-7917

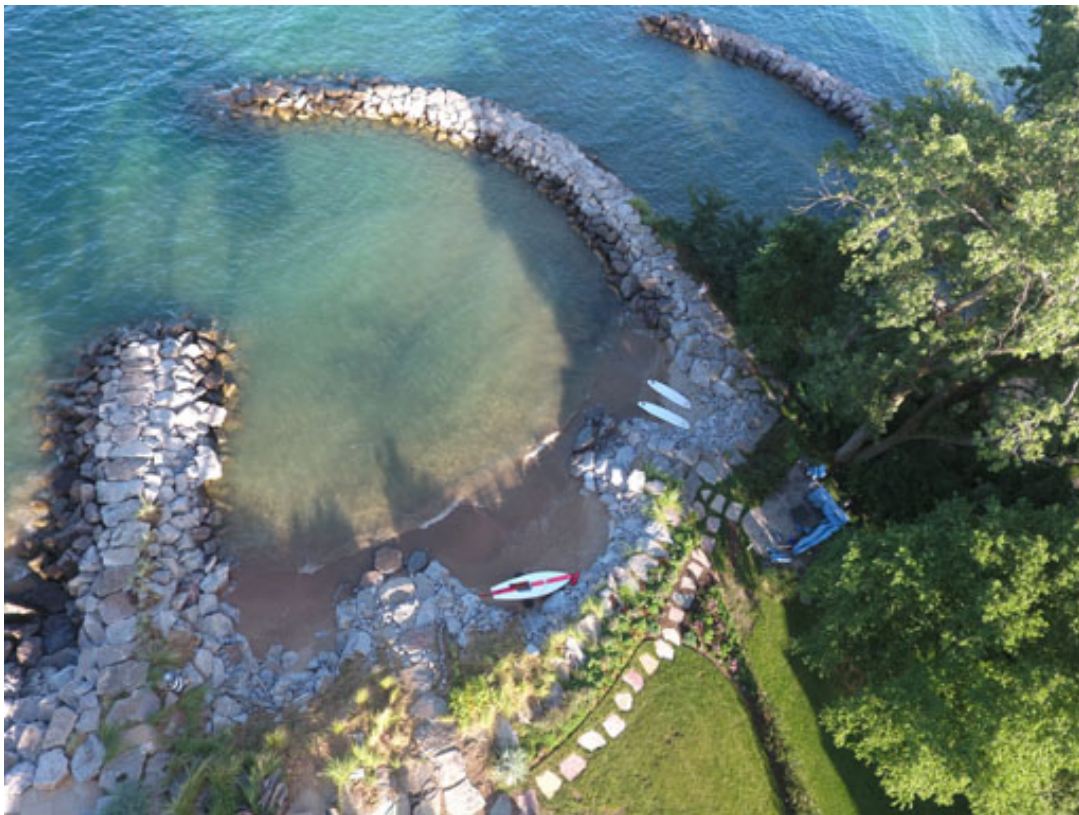


Project Spotlight: Award-Winning Lakefront Property

This 8,000 sq. foot paver project was awarded a Hardscape North America Award in the Clay Brick Residential Category.

The Nature's Perspective team had a chance to work on a gorgeous lakefront Tudor revival home built in 1910, located in the Evanston Lakeshore Historic District. Our clients shared an asphalt driveway with their neighbors, who reside in a newer construction home built in 2005, situated closer to Lake Michigan. The shared driveway was narrow, which caused traffic issues when homeowners were coming home or leaving at the same time, and issues with vehicles hitting retaining walls.

A few years prior to the project, the two neighbors and a third collaborated together to create private sand beaches on the lake. The undertaking involved the delivery and placement of hundreds of large boulders and lots of sand, heavy machinery and equipment. The driveway was damaged as a result, and repair was necessary.



The neighbors collaborated to construct private sand beaches on Lake Michigan.

Our clients requested a wider, more beautiful driveway, constructed of clay pavers with decorative accents, with built-in lighting to improve wayfinding at night, improved drainage and curbing. Some of the obstacles that impacted the design included straightening the driveway to reduce headlights on the house without interfering with the integrity of existing trees, shrubs and retaining walls.

During the course of construction, we changed the grade of the driveway to improve its function, to prevent cars from scraping the driveway as they pull into the lower level garage. Downspouts that were dumping rainwater onto the driveway surface were re-directed underground to a drain tile system. Reducing the amount of rain water going to the driveway from the downspouts and proper grading to redirect surface water resulted in improved driveway function, eliminating drainage issues.



The cast stone fountain has a surrounding walk of laser-cut Valdars stone.

LED low voltage landscape lighting is in both of the properties as well as in the driveway to make it easier to traverse the driveway at night. The LED low voltage lighting system utilizes cutting edge technology to illuminate the properties on a completely customizable automated system, which maximizes lighting potential, while reducing monthly operating costs.

Two more elements that beautify the property are entrance columns and a fountain. Four 5-foot mortared brick columns with tall lanterns mark entrance and exit points at the street, and add distinction to both properties. The round cast stone fountain, set in the lawn, aligned with its front entrance, has a surrounding walk of laser-cut Valdars stone slabs for visitors who gather around it. The fountain is illuminated at night.

The final build earned our team the 2016 Hardscape North America Award in the Clay Brick Residential Category, and was also featured in the digital edition of Turf Magazine. Great job, team!



Looking for Inspiration?

Check out our **Work Portfolio** and take a look at our transformations *here*.



Have a Comment or Question?

Interested in learning more about landscape maintenance services with Nature's Perspective Landscaping?

Learn more [here](#) or call our office at **847-475-7917**

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