



Protecting the Lake
Water and Your
Investment

Lakeshore Buffer Landscaping



Beautiful,
Low Maintenance,
Environmentally
Sound

Getting Help

The SMLA Buffer Landscape Committee is prepared to help you with your Buffer Landscaping by providing resources and free advice that you can use to be successful.

We are partnering with AEP, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and several landscaping and design companies. Call us.



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Preserve Shoreline & Water Quality
Provide Wildlife Habitat
Protect Your Investment



What is Buffer Landscaping?

Buffer Landscaping is the development of areas of trees, shrubs, and perennials – planted or growing naturally – along a waterfront.

The buffer garden acts as a filter for runoff, catching nutrients, sediment, debris and pollutants before they reach the water.

The plant roots hold the soil, slowing erosion thus helping water clarity and protecting aquatic habitat.

Trees and shrubs near the water's edge help shade the water keeping temperatures cooler and improving the habitat for amphibians, fish, and other aquatic life.

Buffer landscaping provides food and habitat for wildlife.

Blooming plants and seasonal color attract butterflies and birds and add to the beauty of the waterfront view.



What are the Benefits?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reported that runoff from lawns, roads, and rooftops is a primary cause of pollution of our waterways. The extra fertilizer from lawns, oil and gas from driveways and roads, soil from building sites, litter, pesticides, sand, and salt are polluting our waterways.

Creating a natural buffer garden on your waterfront property is a way to reduce pollution of the lake and to enjoy multiple benefits. Buffer gardens:

- require less maintenance
- create a natural frame for your water view
- slow and filter storm-water runoff
- provide a natural habitat for wildlife
- protect the value of your property

Buffer landscaping is the natural alternative to clearing trees and planting turf grass. It is a way to personally contribute to protecting the long-term water quality of the lake and your investment in it.

Getting Started

Get a plot plan. You can get one from your county GIS service or you can make your own drawing.

Assess the property. Include the degree of slope, amount of light, moisture and soil types on your property.

Decide on views. What views do you want to preserve? Do you have areas where a buffer could increase privacy or reduce noise from recreational activities on the lake.?



Framing the View of the Lake

Make a drawing. Draw the area to be landscaped. Include all existing trees, shrubs, and plants currently in the buffer area. Also, note all utilities, patios, paths, walls, and hardscape.

Getting Planted

Start small if you have limited time or budget. Plant as much buffer next to the water as possible and in subsequent years add more plantings to lengthen or widen your buffer landscape

Choose plants for your plan that include as many native species as possible. They do well in local soils and conditions, and they also attract wildlife.

Select a variety of trees, shrubs, ground covers, and flowering perennials. Add visual interest with a mixture of heights and colors.

Think Deep Roots.

Space your plantings to allow plenty of room for growth to mature size. Crowded plantings look good at first but often do not survive over time.



Starter Buffer landscape

Getting Established

Watering: Keep the buffer well watered and weeded for the first two years.

Avoid frequent shallow watering which encourages roots to stay on the surface.

Mulching: Apply two-four inches of coarse composted mulch between plants to help keep weeds down and hold moisture.

Weeding: Learn to identify invasive species plants and remove them as soon as you see them.

Feeding: Enjoy very little maintenance and use no fertilizer after your buffer landscape is established .

Trimming: Cut back herbaceous plant growth from the previous year to within two inches of the ground in the spring.



Mature Buffer Landscape.

Getting Plants

The SMLA plant list includes recommended trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowering perennials that do well in this area.

Preference is given to native plants, but cultivars and other readily available plants that survive well are included.



Our landscaping, designer and retailing partners can help. Give us a call.