

Landscaper Language

How to work with your landscape professional to get the PRFCT help you need.

You have made the PRFCT promises to your property to . . .

- **Avoid all chemicals**
- **Grow native plants** (²/₃ for the birds!)
- **Close the loop** (no plant matter leaves and nothing enters except more plants).

These actions will make your property* sing with health and beauty. Great!

* These are living lands, not working lands (your vegetable garden).

Ready, set, GO!

1. TALK WITH YOUR LANDSCAPER

Set up a meeting to review their proposal/invoices and what needs to change.

2. EXPLAIN THE REASONING BEHIND THE CHANGES

Be prepared to explain why these new promises and practices are important to you. (See links for support materials.)

3. STAY FIRM

Be prepared to defend your commitment. For example, you may hear:

- “Organic is more expensive and it doesn’t work.” Typical “organic” approaches often rely on expensive organic products, and it is true, they don’t generally work as well. But with our PRFCT practices (turn page), you don’t need to buy any products to achieve success. It’s about the *process, not products*.
- “You won’t like it.” Assure them that you will be happy with the results if they follow PRFCT practices, and everyone is positively engaged. For example: You will welcome clover in your lawn. You will be happy without seas of mulch. You will celebrate nibbled leaves. And so on.

4. PROVIDE ASSURANCES

We know this is new and different from what they’ve been doing. Assure them they will not be fired as long as they follow PRFCT practices.

5. REQUEST A NEW CONTRACT

Ask for a new proposal. The costs may go down. If your landscaper is worried about loss of income, there are new, mindful tasks they can perform instead. (Turn page.)

PRFCT Practices Quick List

What's (Probably) New for Both of You

- **No fertilizers OR pesticides** at all—even those labeled organic. They're not necessary and they're harmful to you and your pets—that includes organic ones, which kill all insects. Wait for natural predators to come. Everything will be healthier—including you and your pets.
- **Lawn:** Mow high (3 to 3.5 inches). Mow dry. Leave the mulched clippings to feed the lawn, love nitrogen-fixing clover, and water wisely.
- **Irrigation:** Water your lawn deeply (for at least 30 minutes) and *only* when needed.
- **Plant $\frac{2}{3}$ for the Birds:** For every three plants you buy, make two of them native.
- **Trees and Shrubs:** Choose the right plants for the right place, prune only for your safety (over your house, car, or front walk), and leave fallen leaves beneath.
- **Close the Loop:** All plant/organic material stays on your property and finds a way back into the soil.
- **Leaves:** Leave the leaves! . . . in beds and under trees and shrubs. Compost the rest.
- **Mulch:** Don't buy it. Use your (free!) leaf compost and fill your beds with a living mulch or soft landing of native ground covers.
- **No Blow:** Electric is better but best is to avoid all blowers except on hard surfaces. Never blow soil bare.
- **Fall cleanup:** Keep your soil covered (see "mulch" above). Leave seed heads for birds to eat over the winter. Wait until spring to cut back perennials.
- **Scratch and overseed your lawn every fall.** Keep your grass population young.
- **Spring cleanup:** Cut flowering stems and grasses at varying heights (4 to 24 inches) to support insects.



To learn the full story on each of these practices, scan this QR code with your phone and click through the links.

Savings

- No costs to you for chemicals
- No carting and dump fees for grass clippings, cleanups, etc.
- No money for mulch
- No constant pruning prices
- No fees for burlap wrap
- No wasteful water bills

Better Use of Time

(Replaces landscaper's income from discontinued practices.)

- Composting
- Biomass management
- Raking vs blowing
- Hand weeding (lessens over time)
- Monitoring irrigation
- Close observation and conversation
- Planting native plants

YES, I am . . .

- Welcoming clover in my lawn.
- Letting my lawn grow higher.
- Rejoicing at caterpillars nibbling on leaves.
- Leaving leaves under trees.
- Leaving dead wood in trees and shrubs to provide for insects and birds.
- Saving safe snags (standing dead trees).
- Encouraging plants to grow into their natural shapes.
- Loving my Living Landscape. It is alive and always changing.