

Sustainability Report – Sustainable Lawn Management May 21, 2015

By Hiro Kizuka

Pat spoke in her sustainability report in March about reducing or eliminating lawns. I started to reduce the area of lawns in my property just because I wanted to cut down the time spent for mowing. My motivation was initially not about environmental concerns. Up to now I eliminated about 10 x 15 yards of the area of lawns by creating new walkways in the front and the side of the house. I also planted more azalea plants in the front yard.

As you know taking care of lawns causes many environmental problems including polluted waterways by the use of **pesticides, herbicides and excess fertilizers**. But I was surprised to find out that gasoline-powered mowers emit higher level of polluting gases than automobiles because garden equipment engines had been less regulated. Even a new gas powered mower in one hour operation produces polluting gases equivalent to one hour of operation of 11 new cars, each being driven for one hour. Operation of gasoline-powered garden equipment is known to produce up to 5% of the nation's total pollutant.

EPA also estimates that over 17 million gallons of gasoline are spilled each year while refueling lawn equipment. That's more than all the oil spilled by Exxon Valdes, in the Gulf of Alaska.

Reducing the area of your lawn by expanding or creating beds with native or drought-tolerant plants and trees not only reduces mowing but also provides valuable habitat for wildlife attracting birds and butterflies to your yard. Lawns provide nothing for wildlife.

Visit the website of the Lawn Reform Coalition at ***lawnreform.org*** for many more ideas.