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Groundcovers and lawn alternatives

Stout Design Build, Inc.



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Consider a Natural Lawn

Grass lawns that are maintained organically and efficiently can offer a cool surface for both active recreation or just hanging out, but most lawns are maintained inefficiently. It's time to rethink using lawn as all-purpose wall-to-wall groundcover carpet.

Your lawn can be turned into a water conserving **Natural Lawn** that needs up to 50% less water than contemporary fescue lawns. An eight minute shower every two weeks can be enough water to keep it lush, depending on the irrigation system and the specific landscape conditions. To make your lawn more natural, aerate and cast clover seed mixed with worm castings uniformly over the existing lawn area and water thoroughly. No fertilizers or herbicides are needed, as it will grow less vigorously if they are applied. Less frequent mowing every few weeks keeps the lawn at 3" - 4" height. Weeding is almost completely unnecessary; we're encouraging little flowers like English Daisies (*Bellis perennis*), Dutch Clover (*Trifolium repens*) and, in low damp spots, Plantain (*Plantago major*).

Walkable Groundcovers are a good alternative to lawn and can be introduced on the edges of lawn to transition to garden areas. If you don't need to walk on it, then groundcovers can be as high as 36" tall and still look like unified green open space.

Maintain Your Natural Lawn

Apply ¼" deep layer of good compost or worm castings every fall (September through November). If the compost smells of manure do not use it! It will kill the lawn. Use only well-composted materials or worm castings. There should be no noticeable foul odor and good compost has a pleasant, earthy smell.

Keeping grasses longer (4" - 5") provides habitat for small butterflies whose larvae feeds on them. Resist cutting the lawn on a fixed schedule. Allowing the clover and other tiny flowers to grow, ripen and set seed will perpetuate the lawn without any additional over-seeding in the spring or fall. This is the way nature keeps the lawn evergreen and maintenance costs down – the lawn does all the work. If you are mowing frequently, an application of new seed may be required every spring or fall to keep the appearance more uniform.

Ask your lawn care professional about their equipment and insist on a mulching mower, or purchase one to store and use exclusively on your property, keeping other's chemicals, weeds and pests away from your fabulous smart, healthy, and beautiful natural lawn.

Great Groundcovers



1 *Asteriscus maritimus*
Gold Coin Plant



2 *Lomandra longifolia*
'Breeze'
Dwarf Mat Rush



3 *Arctostaphylos edmundsii* *'Carmel Sur'*
Creeping Manzanita



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Walkable Groundcovers



1 *Dymondia margaretae*
Silver Carpet



2 *Cerastium tomentosum*
Snow In Summer



3 *Phyla nodiflora*
Common Lippia



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Step Up Your Groundcover Game

1. **California Native Grasses** can be naturally drought-adapted and provide habitat (food and shelter) for important insect and bird species.

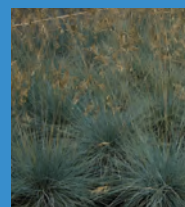
2. **Mow Less Frequently** or not at all to keep the grass from growing too quickly and using more water. Some ornamental grasses don't need to be mowed, and others like to be kept long so the old growth shades the new.

3. **Please Don't Pick The Daisies** nor apply any herbicide to them. English Daisies, Clover, Plantain, and even Dandelion reduce compaction, provide evergreen groundcover and have flowers that feed insects and birds. Whack them back only if they get too feisty.

Plants For Tough Spots:



Festuca ovina
Sheep's Fescue



Festuca californica
California Fescue



Agrostis pallens
Bent Grass



Fragaria chiloensis
Strawberry



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