

ENERGY EXTRA

The Grand Valley's Energy Newsletter

Landscaping to Save Energy

It's that time of year again. Everyone is planting flowers and mowing yards but did you know that now is a great time to also work on reducing your summer electric bill. That's right, landscaping can put money in your pocket.

You may have noticed the coolness of parks and wooded areas compared to the temperature of nearby streets or exposed rooftops. Shading and evapotranspiration (the process by which a plant actively moves and releases water vapor) from trees can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 9°F. Because cool air settles near the ground, air temperatures directly under trees can be as much as 25°F cooler than air temperatures above nearby blacktop.

The average electric bill will increase \$80 per month from June – September due to home cooling appliances. The easiest way to reduce electric costs is to reduce the amount of time that an appliance operates. This can be accomplished by strategically placing trees and shrubs around your house. Larger, deciduous trees (trees that shed their leaves in the winter) placed on the south side of your home will shade the home in the summer and allow the sunshine through in the winter. Shorter, lower canopy trees should be planted on the west side of your home to help shade the home from the late afternoon and early evening solar gain. Shrubs or vines may also be placed on the west side of your home to help reduce solar gain.

Strategic landscape design now will result in a beautiful yard and years of energy savings.



Brought to you by:

Derek Elder
Energy Services Ad-
ministrator
Grand Valley Power



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