

Houston's Guide to Planting Organic

presented by



plant**houston**.organic.org

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The drought of 2011 hit Texas hard.

It was a wakeup call for all of us. As the days without rain turned into weeks and those weeks turned into months – we watched the decline in our lawns and gardens. The situation was more dire than any of us realized. Our whole ecological system was in danger, and we had huge losses. Over **66 million trees alone died in our region**. Major water restrictions were enforced all over Texas. Finally, we began to realize how precious and scarce our water really is.

“ Texas is in a permanent water crisis that is highlighted by the drought. We must find more water. ”

~ Edward Vaughn
Texas Water Development Board

Houston's Treescape

Imagine our city without its green environmental backdrop. It's just not Houston. Yet some people want to do away with landscapes as an unnecessary use of water. An unnecessary move to say the least. We need trees, flowers, beautiful shrubs and grass to provide us a high quality of life. Landscapes organically installed and organically maintained do not require near as much water as chemically treated lawns.

We were hit hard by the drought but we can restore Houston to her former glory—with an even better foundation. Together we can Plant Houston sustainably. With Organics we can have it all, essential life giving landscapes and a reduction of water use. Plant Houston Organic. Plant Houston with Microlife- Mother Earth's Favorite Food.

Urban Heat Island

Trees, landscapes and greenscapes cool our city. Without them, our cities get much hotter.



We Need Landscapes

Trees, shrubs, grasses and flowers are essential to our well-being. They protect us environmentally, and contribute heavily to our mental and physical health. Organic landscapes prove to be much more than an aesthetic choice for homeowners and other areas. In fact, our lawns have many lifestyle and environmental benefits, including:

- Cool our city, countering urban heat islands
- Provide us with oxygen
- Remove contaminants from our air
- Clean our water
- Reduce flooding
- Reduce global warming by storing carbon
- Promote mental health, reduce anxiety
- Reduce noise

However, water supplies are becoming less available as our state's population grows from 25 million in 2012 to 46 million in 2060. **Our water supply is limited, and by the year 2060 35% of all Texans may not have water to drink.** That is, unless we act now and prepare for the future. This means dramatic water conservation measures will be enacted and the cost of water will make it imperative that we do so.

Only Organics provide us with a sustainable future. We've published this planting guide to help get Houston on track towards that future. Using products like **MicroLife All Organic Biological Fertilizers** when planting and maintaining landscapes can help eliminate most of the concerns about water conservation. You could even save 25% - 50% on your current water bill. Healthy soils absorb and store more water which decreases run off and makes watering much more efficient.

Planting Guidelines

We know that Organic landscapes far outperformed chemical landscapes during the **Drought of 2011**. And even more important, Organic landscapes are safe for children and pets. Chemical landscapes, to put it simply, are not. With Organics, we have better performing and more resilient plants which require less water.

We are in a new era where temperatures are getting hotter, water is becoming scarce, and we are concerned about chemical toxicity. The answer to a healthy, sustainable future is Organics.

This is where MicroLife reigns supreme.

Tree Specifications

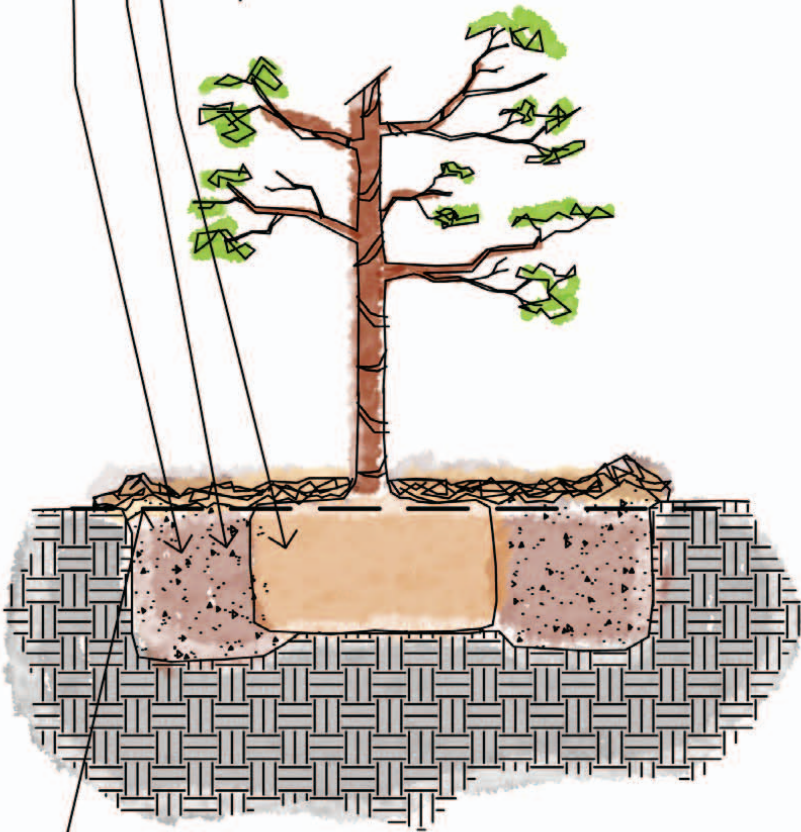
Trees give Houston our environmental identity. Because of the 2011 Drought, we have lost tens of millions of our precious trees. In addition to beauty, shade, cooling and providing oxygen, **Houston trees clean up to 60,575 tons of pollution every year.** We need our trees. Here is a great spec to follow for your new planting.

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For every 15 gal. size, add 6 oz. **MicroLife 8-4-6 Organic Fertilizer** and one package of **Rhizanova Tree Treatment Compost** to backfill mix

Add high quality compost like **Nature's Way Resources Leaf Mold** or the **The Ground Up Humus Compost** to supplement backfill materials

Water plants thoroughly with **MicroLife Super Seaweed Root Stimulator**



Top Dress with Native Hardwood Mulch from **Nature's Way Resources** or **The Ground Up**

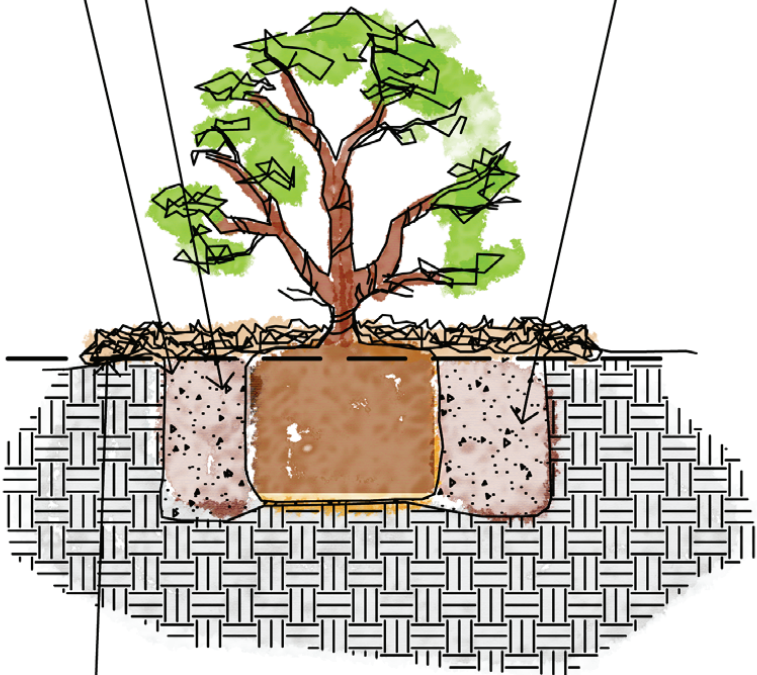
Ornamental Shrubs and Perennial Specifications

Beautiful shrubs and perennials add great diversity of form, texture and color. Plant the right one correctly also means basically maintenance free enjoyment. **Use natives or well-adapted plants.**

For every 5 gal. size add 2 oz. of **Microlife 8-4-6 Organic Fertilizer** and 1 oz. of **Soil Moist Crystals** around the roots

Backfill with high quality planting mix like **Nature's Way Resources Rose Soil** or **The Ground Up Premium Bed & Garden Mix**

Water plants thoroughly with **Microlife Super Seaweed Root Stimulator**



Top Dress with **Native Aged Hardwood Mulch** from **Nature's Way Resources** or **The Ground Up**

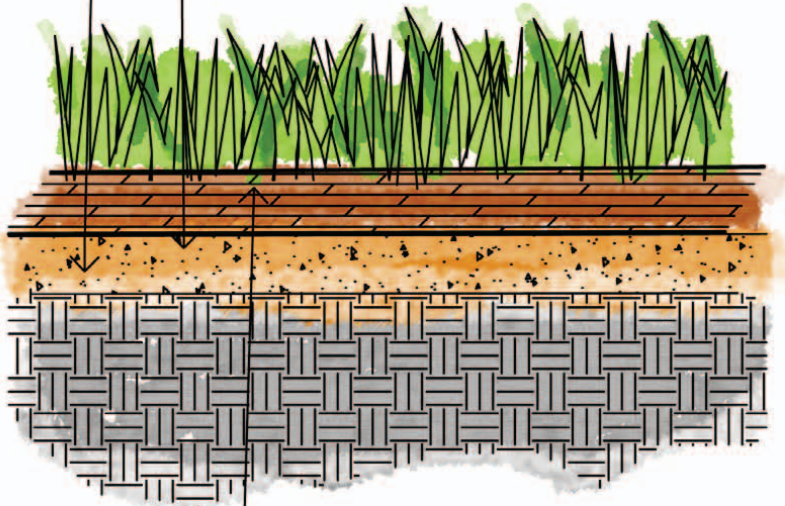
Turfgrass Specifications

We need the open wonderfulness of what lawn brings us. Places to play, get sunlight, to see vistas, to move around or just lay down on. **When grass is installed correctly we can have awesome yards without using a lot of water.**

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Apply 2 lbs. MicroLife 6-2-4 Organic Fertilizer, 1 lb. of MicroLife Humates Plus Soil Conditioner and 8 oz. of Soil Moist Crystals per 100 sq. ft. on top of soil prior to laying sod

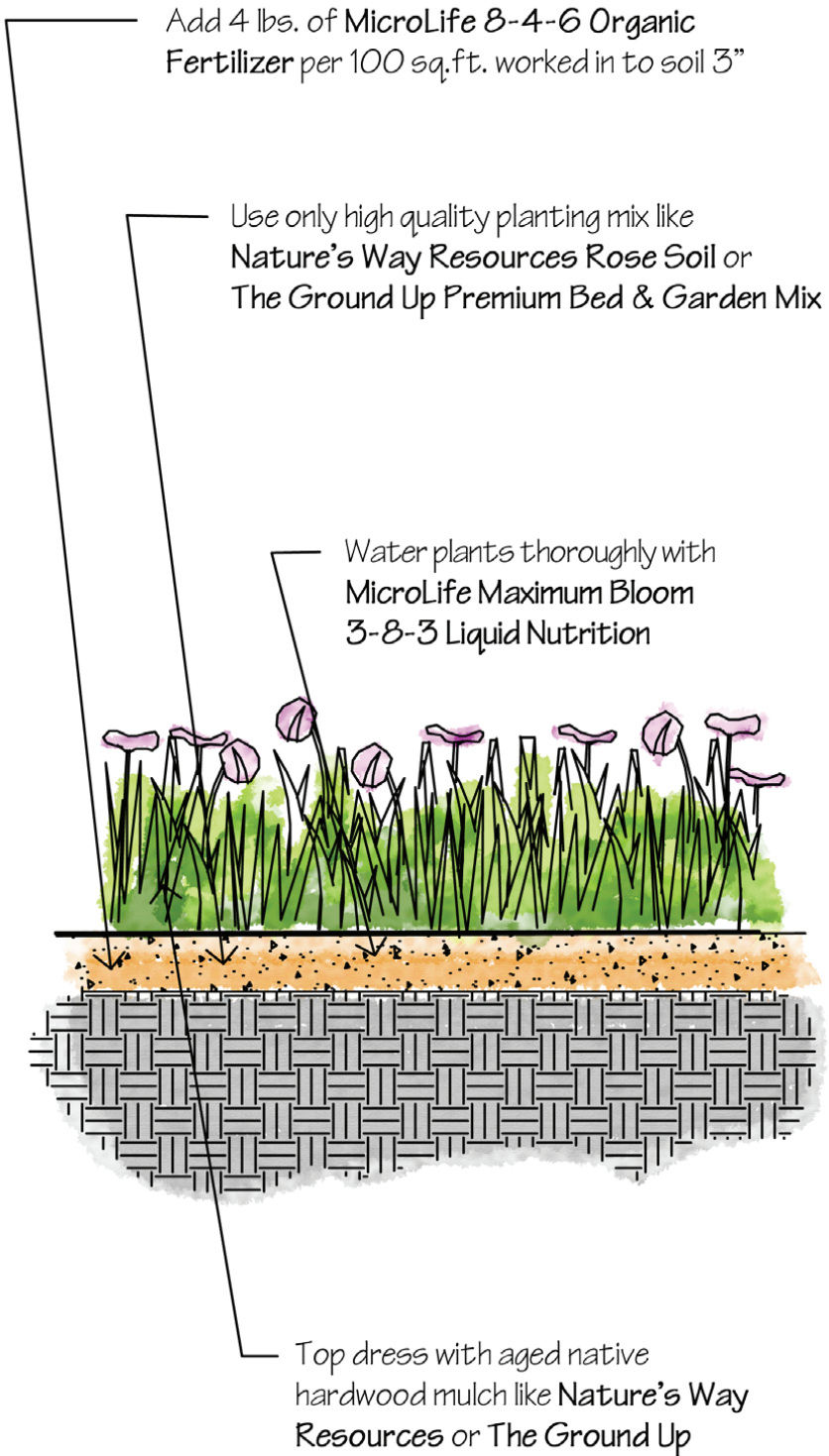
Apply ¼" of high quality compost evenly spread like Nature's Way Resources Leaf Mold Compost or The Ground Up Humus Compost to the soil prior to laying sod



Water new sod thoroughly with MicroLife Super Seaweed Root Stimulator

Flowers & Vegetables Specifications

Annual Flowers and Vegetable needs are similar. By using these specs not only will you save water use but your food is grown Organically and will be much healthier for you.



A Word about Water

Maximum landscape water conservation is a blend of efficient irrigation, improved soil health and bigger plant roots. In other words, less water will be needed when there is a perfect symbiosis of soil and plant health – a symbiosis that can never be achieved using chemicals. Our goal of better soil health and stronger plants means the use of Organics. We want soils high in Organic matter and teaming with biology.

When our soils are improved we have greater water infiltration, greater soil water storage and bigger plant roots. Then we can better utilize Mother Earth's rain and cut down on water irrigation time. It is important to understand that as our soils improve, we must coordinate the irrigation run time with the improved soils absorption. We do not want to over water.

The greatest water conservation we can see right away is on our turfgrass areas. Generally, all turfgrass is grown on compacted soils and this is where the majority of our water is wasted. **Only the use of Organics will improve turfgrass soil health** - again, something that can never be accomplished using chemicals. Trees, Shrubs, Flowers, Vegetables and all soils benefit greatly with the use of Organics, and will require less irrigation than chemical landscapes.

Organic Landscapes
require
25%-50% less water
than conventional
landscapes

We can improve any soil by using quality Organic products.
This is what happens:

- Quality Organic products like **MicroLife**, **Nature's Way Resources** and **The Ground Up** provide carbon and minerals to feed the soil microbes and provide sound plant nutrition.
- The microbes then reshape the soil and make it better by improving the water infiltration rate and the capacity to store more water
- Quality Organics cause bigger and deeper roots to grow
- With bigger and deeper roots, plants have a greater ability to find water in the soil
- Organics increases the organic matter content of the soil so greater water is stored
- **Organic Landscapes require 25- 50% less water**, and plants are better able to withstand stress

Drought Tolerant Plants

Use plants that can perform well under adverse conditions; hot/dry summers, very cold winters and periods of lots of rains. We've listed a few of the great plants available. Ask your favorite independent nursery center or landscape professional what they recommend.

Trees

- Burr Oak
- Cedar Elm
- Chinquapin Oak
- Chitalpa
- Desert Museum Palo Verde
- Mexican White Oak
- Montezuma Cypress
- Mexican Sycamore
- Palms
- Texas Olive
- Vitex
- Walter's Viburnum
- Yaupon Holly

Perennials & Flowers

- Angelonia
- Cleome
- Firecracker
- Gulf Coast Muhly
- Hummingbird Bush
- Lantana
- Portulaca
- Purple Coneflower
- Rudbeckia
- Ruellia – Katie & Upright
- Salvia
- Society Garlic

Shrubs

- Bougainvilla
- Bottlebrush
- Brakelight Red Yucca
- Caesalpina
- Cape Honeysuckle
- Dwarf Yaupon
- Earthkind Rose
- Jasmine
- Mexican Bush Sage
- Oleander
- Pineapple Guava
- Plum Yew
- Saw Palmetto
- Sweet Olive
- Thornless Prickly Pear
- Red Yucca
- Wax Myrtle

Turfgrass

- St. Augustine
- Zoysia
- Bermuda

Plant list courtesy of:
Taylor Moore New Nurseries,
newnurseries.com and friends

Recommended Products

It is very important to use only **quality**, well **proven organics** as recommended in this booklet. Here is a brief description on the ones we endorse.



microlifefertilizer.com



MicroLife 6-2-4 All Organic Biological Fertilizer

Multi-Purpose Houston's # 1 selling Organic fertilizer. Use everywhere. Very nutritious. Contains over 70 minerals and billions of beneficial microorganisms. Available 40 lb * 7 lb



MicroLife 8-4-6 All Organic Biological Fertilizer

Great for starting all new plantings. Contains extra amounts of the Humates, Rock minerals and Phosphate. Has over 70 minerals and billions of beneficial microorganisms. Available 40 lb * 7 lb



MicroLife Humates Plus All Organic Biological Soil Amendment

'Concentrated Compost in a Bag'. Improves all soils and loosens clay soils. Has over 70 minerals and billions of beneficial microorganisms. Available 40 lb



Rhizanova Tree Transplant Packs

This makes starting new trees much more successful. Each pack contains Soil Moist Water Crystals, Mycorrhizal Fungi and starter Humates. Available 3 oz pack



MicroLife Liquid Super Seaweed Root Stimulator

This very unique health mix stimulates roots right way and provides an instant pick up for all plants.

Available Qt * Gal



Soil Moist Water Absorbing/Releasing Crystals

Little tiny polymer crystals that absorb and release water back to the plant. Cuts water need by 50%. Must be used at time of planting. Available 1 lb * 3 lb * 8 lb * 50 lb



Nature's Way Resources Leaf Mold Compost

Houston's premium compost that takes 2 years to mature to ensure the highest quality. Rich in humus content and beneficial microbes. Available 40 lb * Bulk



Nature's Way Resources Native Hardwood Mulch

Highest quality available. Rich in nutrients, beneficial microbes, humus and no weed seeds. Stays in place. Available 40 lb * Bulk



Nature's Way Resources Rose Soil

Great planting mix comprised of topsoil, compost, Sharp/Green/Granite sands and MicroLife. All plants grow great with this. Available in 40 lb. Bulk



thegroundup.com



The Ground Up Humus Compost

Handcrafted humus aerobically composted from native plant material. Ultra-rich in beneficial microbes. Soil Food Web Tested and approved. Available 40 lb * Bulk



The Ground Up Native Hardwood Mulch

Beautiful goodness with awesome performance. Composted for 9 months and rich in beneficial microbes. Available 40 lb * Bulk



The Ground Up Premium Bed & Garden Mix

A rich mix of our handcrafted Humus Compost & Angular Sand. Provides essential nutrients, microbes and drainage. Available 40 lb * Bulk

How You Can Help

Plant Houston Organic is a mission that benefits and unites us all. It is an opportunity to build a greater and healthier future for us all on a permanent basis. We need beautiful landscapes, we need clean water, we need clean air, we need safe homes and landscapes. We need to plant Organic.

More Information

microlifefertilizer.com

On this website you will find the complete 'How To Go Organic' manual which contains Organic maintenance programs and Organic problem solving. You will also find valuable information and complete product descriptions.

ohbaonline.org

OHBA, Organic Horticulture Benefits Alliance is a 501-c-3 educational nonprofit that offers 6 – 8 high level, non-commercialized seminars that teach the science, how-to and economics of 'Going Organic'

planthoustonorganic.org



MicroLifeTM
ALL ORGANIC, BIOLOGICAL FERTILIZER