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Contributed photo

Growing native plants, like these black eyed susans, requires less care than imported plantings.

Five low-cost tips to create an eco-friendly yard

The trend of becoming more eco-friendly at home is spreading rapidly across the country. However, this consciousness is often considered too pricey by some home owners. This is not necessarily the case. Here are five eco-savvy tips you can implement that are good for the planet and easy on your wallet.

Select native plants

Choose plants that are natural to this area for ecological reasons. They easily assimilate and require less care than imported varieties. Plus, native plants tend to be treated with fewer pesticides, reducing the chemical impact on your property.

Use organic fertilizers

Today, organic fertilizers and non-toxic pest control options are readily available and affordable. These applications minimize chemicals in your yard and the result-

ing run-off water that drains into public water systems.

Compost yard waste

Turn leaves, plant trimmings and vegetable waste into a nutrient-rich compost that feeds your landscape. Buy a composter or create a pile in a hidden area of your property. Materials take about a year to break down, so next spring, everything will be ready for recycling.

Harvest rain water

To cut down on water usage, place barrels underneath down spouts to collect the rain. Then, use it to water your plants. Harvesting rain is such a simple process and very beneficial for your yard.

In addition, you can create a "rain garden" to capture storm water that naturally pools in a low spot in your yard. Plant suitable trees, shrubs and flowers in this area that will soak up excess water and protect

water quality.

Plant trees and shrubs

Trees and shrubs develop large root systems that minimize run-off and soil erosion. With less lawn area, you'll reduce energy expended on mowing while saving water.

The award-winning team at Hoffman Landscapes is well-versed at helping homeowners implement these strategies with care and style. Hoffman Landscapes has three Connecticut locations, Wilton, Greenwich and Washington, serving Fairfield, Westchester and Litchfield counties. For more information, call 834-9656 or visit www.HoffmanLandscapes.com

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