



SITE EFFICIENCY

Often, we think about taking actions inside our building to save energy, but we rarely think about what's outside of our building that impacts our energy usage.

Well-designed, water-wise outdoor landscape can help reduce heating and cooling costs inside your building.

Albuquerque residents and businesses have done a great job at saving water; however, many businesses have tackled water conservation by adding concrete and gravel to their landscapes, further increasing the temperature around their facilities and throughout our City. This “heat island” effect is increasingly becoming a concern as temperatures rise due to climate change.

Using trees and vegetation through water-wise landscaping is an important part of energy conservation. Plants help lower surface and air temperatures by providing shade and through evapotranspiration. According to the EPA, shaded surfaces may be 20–45°F cooler than the peak temperatures of unshaded materials.

Additional Resources:

<https://www.energy.gov/articles/energy-saver-101-infographic-landscaping>
<https://www.epa.gov/nps/urban-runoff-low-impact-development>
<http://www.505outside.com/water-smart-tips/>

What steps can you take on the outside of your business to reduce your environmental impact?

Plant trees and vegetation to help shade your building, especially on the west and south side of the building if it receives direct sunlight. Remember even climate-friendly trees need water. Native plant species are ideal as they require less maintenance and watering.

Use vegetation for wind breaks to help deflect northern winds in the winter.

Use mulch to keep trees and plants cool and reduce weed growth.

Reduce or eliminate the use of gravel and concrete and add more permeable surfaces including pavement stones or organic materials.

Eliminate the use of gas-powered landscaping equipment. For example, most leaf blowers are powered by fossil fuels and emit pollution. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, commercial grade gas-powered blowers can emit as much pollution in one hour as driving a 2016 Toyota Camry 1,100 miles. Better options can include electric leaf blowers, lawn mowers and trimmers or using yard vacuums or even rakes!

Explore low impact development techniques in your landscaping creating natural landscape features that capture water for vegetation, increase water infiltration and reduce heat.

