

Landscaping in or adjacent to a wetland is subject to Conservation Commission regulation.

That's why it's important to contact the Conservation Commission before starting work.

Martha's Vineyard is an exceptional place. Protecting our coastal ponds is vital to preserving the Island's environment, character, quality of life, activities, economy, and drinking water.

Though we all love the Vineyard, people sometimes make decisions and take actions that may adversely impact wetlands. That is why the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has given Conservation Commissions permitting authority over most changes in or near wetlands and other critical natural features.

Before you cut, prune, mow, plant, or dig in or near a wetland . . .

On Martha's Vineyard, all landscaping — including cutting and pruning of trees and alteration of the land — within or adjacent to a wetland, bank, beach, dune, or water body is subject to the jurisdiction of the town's Conservation Commission, regardless of who owns the land. The depth of this protected area, designated as a buffer in some towns and resource areas in others, is 100 feet in West Tisbury, Chilmark, Oak Bluffs, and Tisbury; and is 200 feet in Aquinnah and in Edgartown (300 feet in the Great Ponds district). The Riverfront Act further limits actions within 200' of a stream.

Contact your town's Conservation Commission early in the planning process, before starting any work. They will advise you as to what permits may be needed and how to plan your work to comply with the Wetlands Protection Act requirements and local by-laws. The processing time for any permit will be at least 2 weeks, to allow for advertising and a public meeting or hearing.

Aquinnah — 508-645-2300 — aqbos@adelphia.net

Chilmark — 508-645-2114 — chodgkinson@ci.chilmark.ma.us
www.ci.chilmark.ma.us

Edgartown — 508-627-6165 — e-con-lm@vineyard.net
www.edgartown-ma.us

Oak Bluffs — 508-693-3554 ext 118 — edurkee@ci.oak-bluffs.ma.us
www.ci.oak-bluffs.ma.us/conservation

Tisbury — 508-696-4260 — lbarbera@ci.tisbury.ma.us
www.tisburygov.org

West Tisbury — 508-696-6404 — concomm@town.west-tisbury.ma.us
www.ci.west-tisbury.ma.us

It's Only Natural!

LANDSCAPING IN AND NEAR VINEYARD WETLANDS

Produced by the All-Island
Conservation Commissions

With the support of the
Martha's Vineyard Commission
www.mvcommission.org

Landscaping in the Vineyard Character

1. Use Native Vegetation for Buffer Areas

- Allow native-vegetated buffer strips to remain at the edge of wetlands and water bodies and in areas where water drains. These natural barriers slow water flow and filter pollutants. If this area has been disturbed, allow the native vegetation to regrow.

2. Use “Native” Plants

- Plants indigenous to the Vineyard:
 - help reduce erosion by providing a sturdy & absorbent root base;
 - are already acclimated to the area; so they require less maintenance;
 - promote biodiversity & stewardship of our natural heritage;
 - provide food, shelter and breeding sites for many species of local wildlife and many migratory birds.
- A list of native and compatible plants is available at www.mvcommission.org

3. Avoid Invasive Species

- These plants spread rapidly and crowd out native plants.

- Resources for listings of plants to avoid
www.mass.gov/agr/farmproducts
[www.pollyhillarboretum.org/invasive plants](http://www.pollyhillarboretum.org/invasive_plants)
the voluntary code for Nursery Professionals:
www.centerforplantconservation.org/invasives

4. Reduce or Eliminate High-Maintenance, Irrigated Lawns

- Minimize the area of highly maintained lawn to those areas really needed for family recreation.
- For a healthy lawn, use a blend of grasses—such as fescue and perennial rye (with about 40-50% sheep fescue)—that require less fertilizer and are more drought resistant than bluegrasses and make lawns more tolerant of pests and resistant to disease.

5. Landscape to Minimize Watering

- Work with the property’s natural conditions to minimize unnecessary watering.
- Steep slopes should be allowed to grow with sturdy native plants.
- Mulch, such as bark chips, woody debris, fallen leaves and organic matter, help reduce runoff and provide important wildlife habitat.
- For information on techniques, called “low-impact development” go to www.mass.gov/envir/lid

6. Use Slow-Release Organic Fertilizer

- Synthetic, chemical, and nitrogen-based fertilizers should not be used in buffer/resource areas. (Hint: High ratio numbers of N/P/K indicate synthetic fertilizers).

7. Avoid Pesticides

- Pesticides are poisons.
 - Pesticide exposure in humans has been associated with birth defects, numerous cancers, neurological disorders, male infertility and immune system problems
 - Pesticides contaminate drinking water and surface water bodies
 - Children are particularly vulnerable to the toxic effects of pesticides and are more at risk due to their size and behaviors.
 - Lawn pesticides may be carried indoors via pets, soles of shoes, etc., where they linger in carpets, dust and in the air.
 - An EPA registration number does not guarantee safety.
- For suggestions on safer alternatives for dealing with pests, go to community.turi.org/IPMresources