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Is your lawn a big spender? Bianca Chafin, the City's environmental programs specialist, says to "put it on a budget. Save money and the environment with a Texas SmartScape.®"

Fifty to 80 percent of the typical household's summertime water bill goes to watering the lawn or yard. Chafin said cutting down on outdoor water use—and other landscape costs, such as fertilizers and pesticides—just makes sense.

"A yard that is 'smart' for Texas doesn't have to mean rocks and cactus," Chafin said. "Using beautiful native and adapted plants, plus a few simple maintenance practices, can save homeowners significant money while still giving them the lush looking landscape they want. And it's better for the environment."

Learn how to use hardy native and adapted plants that require much less water once established and require little fertilizer and pesticides to thrive. SmartScape teaches how to get the most "bang for your buck" through proper landscape design, smart watering, and proper use of mulch and soil additives.

To encourage residents of Burleson to implement Texas SmartScape, the City is hosting its first Texas SmartScape® yard contest! The Texas SmartScape® yard contest will recognize residential yards that utilize native or adapted species.

Burleson residents have until July 31 to get their landscapes in tip-top SmartScape® shape and enter the yard contest. In August, members of Keep Burleson Beautiful will review entries. The first place winner will receive \$100 cash, the second place winner will receive \$75 and the third place winner will receive \$25 cash.

Whether you're in the market for a major landscape overhaul or just a few quick fixes to save water this summer, www.txsmartscape.com has the tools to help you succeed, from a searchable database that lists SmartScape-approved plants by color, shape, amount of sunlight or water needed; to a landscape design tool; to care and maintenance tips.

Four Simple Steps to Put Your Yard on a Budget

- Water early or late (it is against City code to use a sprinkler system to water your lawn between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., year round). Fifty percent of

- your irrigation can be lost to evaporation, especially if you use misting sprinklers.
- Water less frequently. Most lawns only need watering once every five-seven days in the growing season and every 15-20 days in the winter. If it rains, you may be able to water even less.
 - Install drip irrigation in flower beds and at the roots of shrubs. Drip irrigation delivers almost 95 percent of the water to plants. Installing drip irrigation doesn't have to be costly—soaker hoses can be purchased for under \$15 at your local hardware store.
 - Use mulch. Place a 3-inch layer of organic mulch around plants and on top of the soil in flower beds. This will hold in water to keep the soil moist longer.

Cut your lawn's budget! Enter the Texas SmartScape® yard contest by submitting an entry form and pictures of your yard to the City of Burleson environmental services division, 141 W. Renfro, Burleson, Texas 76028 by July 31. The entry form can be obtained by calling the City of Burleson environmental services division at 817-447-5410, ext. 269, or by downloading the form from the City's web page at www.burlesontx.com (environmental services).