Apply for the 2024 Alexandria Beautification Awards

Nominations open April 5 - May 24

Awards will be given for excellence in 4 different categories:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Architectural
- Community

including front yards & balconies

Winning properties/projects will be chosen from around the city based on the extended criteria provided on our website. Some notable factors include:

- Utilization of sustainable practices
- Use of native, non-invasive plants & materials
- Dedicated maintenance
- Novel or creative architectural design
- Improvements to public spaces

Learn more & apply now at alexandriava.gov/beautification

@beautifulALX AlexandriaBeautification
Maintaining a Beautiful & Sustainable Yard or Balcony at Home

Take advantage of the following practices that promote environmental health, conserve resources, and support biodiversity.

**Plant Natives**
Choose native plants for your yard. They are adapted to the local climate and require less water and maintenance once established. They also provide habitat and food for local wildlife.

**Beware Invasives**
Avoid planting non-native invasives, which often outcompete native plants for resources like sunlight and water and lead to altering ecosystems and reducing biodiversity. Invasive species can be expensive to control and eradicate.

**Conserve Water**
Install a rain barrel to collect rainwater for watering plants. Use a drip irrigation system or soaker hoses to minimize water waste. Water your lawn and plants in the early morning or late afternoon to reduce evaporation.

**Compost**
Start a compost pile or bin to recycle yard waste, such as grass clippings, leaves, and kitchen scraps. Compost adds nutrients to the soil, reduces the need for chemical fertilizers, and minimizes waste sent to landfills.

**Mulch**
Apply a layer of organic mulch, such as wood chips, shredded leaves, or grass clippings around plants and trees to retain moisture, suppress weeds, and improve soil health. Mulch also helps regulate soil temperature and reduce erosion.

**Choose Lawn Alternatives**
Consider reducing the size of your lawn or replacing it with low-maintenance alternatives such as native groundcovers (e.g., phlox), meadows, or permeable hardscapes like gravel or permeable pavers that allow rainwater to infiltrate the soil and help reduce stormwater erosion.

**Promote Energy Efficiency**
Plant native trees (e.g., serviceberry, black gum, dogwood, oaks) strategically to provide shade and reduce cooling costs in the summer. Use manual or electric-powered tools instead of gas-powered equipment for yard maintenance to minimize air and noise pollution.

Visit alexandriava.gov/beautification for more tips & links to native plant lists!