



# Apply for the 2026 Alexandria Beautification Awards

Nominations open April 1 - July 15, 2026

Awards will be given for excellence the following categories:



Architectural  
Design



Community &  
Commercial



Residential  
Landscapes



Public Art

Winning properties and projects from across the city will be selected based on the full criteria outlined on our website. Key considerations include sustainable practices; use of native, non-invasive plants and materials; dedicated maintenance; innovative or creative design; and meaningful improvements to public spaces.

The Beautification Commission, in partnership with the City, is challenging property owners to plant red, white, and blue native gardens in 2026 in celebration of the 250th anniversary of American independence. **As a special category in our annual awards program, we will recognize properties that feature creative plantings of native species in red, white, and blue to honor America250.**

Learn more & apply now at [alexandriava.gov/beautification](https://alexandriava.gov/beautification)



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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 & Pesticides

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. Pesticides also pollute our environment.



## 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, sedge), 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](https://alexandriava.gov/beautification) for more tips & links to native plant lists!

