

Longwood University
Landscape and Grounds
Sustainable operations

Compost operation:

Every work day the dining hall is in operations landscape and Grounds picks up Pulped food waste and mixes it in our leave compost pile. We average about 66 to 96 gallons daily during the work week. Over an average school year it's about 27 tons.

This reduces the amount of solid waste going to the landfill.

Its helps add organics to our compost operations which produces about 50 to 60 tons of composted soil a year for use by us in plant beds and lawn areas.

Lessen our need to purchase external compost soil (Thus reducing emissions and monetary expenses).

Nutrient Management Plan:

This state approved certified plan is our road map for all fertilizer application on turf on the campus and outside properties. It's based off of soil testing and with the goal to reduce the amount of fertilizer to about of 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. and no phosphorus per applications based on soil needs for each area.

The Landscape and Grounds department is required to have a certified fertilizer applicator on staff. We have 10 state certified applicators in the department. This requires yearly training to keep the certification up to date.

The plan goes thru a renewal process every three years and has to be performed by a certified nutrient management planner.

Integrated pest management:

Landscape and Grounds only uses approved pesticides and herbicides, which are applied by State-licensed applicators. All full time employees are required to be certified. We even provide training to our part time employees as well and have some who are certified as well. (See L&G IPM plan)

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Irrigation operations:

Since 2012 the university has invested in the sustainability practices of the campus irrigation system. The department has been working on improvements to the campus systems computer program, controllers, weather stations additions, and soil sensor monitors. The old system could not monitor existing weather conditions or current soil moisture levels. We are currently working to install water flow valves so that the system can detect leaks and shut the system down and inform us of the problem. The systems are also metered separate so we can monitor water consumption.

Turf reduction Program:

Since 2013 the department has reduced about 2.3 acres of turf. This has gone in to plant beds and mulched areas around large trees. With less grass to maintain it reduces our carbon emissions and save labor to work on plant beds and other areas of campus. The mulched area actually helps maintain better soil moisture and reduces soil compaction and damage to large tree roots.

Plant selection for new beds:

The department plays a bigger part in selecting plants that are more drought tolerant in all campus construction then it did in the past. We also are looking to use more native plants and picking the right plant for the right location.

Mulching:

We use mulching as a way to help control weeds with less chemicals and reduce the need to water plant material with irrigation. Last year was the first year to start using a natural wood chip straight from the wood chipper for mulching large areas. Before we were purchasing 6 tractor trailer loads of commercial double shredded mulch from an outside supplier. Our goal going forward is to change to all natural and cut down on the expense of purchasing mulch.