



Beautiful No-Mow Yards: 50 Amazing Lawn Alternatives

Evelyn J. Hadden

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In this ultimate guide to rethinking one's yard, Hadden showcases dozens of inspiring, eco-friendly alternatives to that demanding (and dare we say boring?) green turf. From a lively prairie to a runoff-reducing rain garden, award-winning author Hadden shows readers how to convert their yards.

Beautiful No-Mow Yards: 50 Amazing Lawn Alternatives Details

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From Reader Review Beautiful No-Mow Yards: 50 Amazing Lawn Alternatives for online ebook

Wendi says

My sister let me borrow this book. I read and flipped through a lot of it. I don't want to convert my grass into other plants, but it did give me good ideas for areas that don't get our sprinklers what to plant, instead of just having rocks. And does make me think twice about landscaping more of my grass into winding paths, or places my kids can play and discover. I really enjoyed the chapter for kids play areas.

Ellen says

This is the first how-to gardening book I've read cover to cover. Full of practical ideas for not only lawn alternatives, but for rain gardens, xeriscaping, shade islands under trees, and more, Beautiful No Mow Lawns takes you step by step through the work of replacing grass with plants that don't need as much mowing, watering, or fertilizing. The photographs are gorgeous and the author even references local Homestead Gardens blogger, Susan Harris. The hard thing for this neophyte gardener is going to be waiting until our blistering summer heat is over before I try one or two of the projects the author describes.

Leslie says

The carefree look of many of these gardens gives the reader a calm, peaceful feeling. The natural biodiversity of a garden that isn't full of artificial turf grass and chemicals is, to me, a no-brainer. I haven't wasted much time on fertilizing and watering lawns, nor have I sown much grass seed, but I have retained and mowed wide swaths of green that do not give as much interest as gardens. On each of my properties I have limited the grass lawns with patios, decks, and gardens, but this concept makes me want to expand beyond that to have mostly garden and, perhaps, a small swath of mowed green as a path. My husband loves a lawn, but I might be able to persuade him with this book.

Sara says

Well, I feel considerably better about our "lawn" of clover, creeping charlie and violets. Apparently, that's called a "freedom lawn" and there is nothing wrong with it! So thrive little freedom lawn, thrive, until the day I can cut back your size with big beautiful beds of native shrubs and flowers.

Julie says

I didn't read this completely, but skimmed and read the chapters that were most interesting to me. The great reasons for switching part or all of your turf to other options are convincing. There are lots of great ideas and

photographs. I do wish the last chapters of ground cover examples had photos of each one. Olbrich Gardens in Madison were featured a few times (On, Wisconsin!).

We're now planning to convert a patch of mostly weeds in our front yard to ground cover with a cherry tree in the middle.

jess says

I hate lawn grasses with a passion and I'm always looking for ways to get rid of mine. This book is great inspiration for anti-lawn yards, including photos from over 50 different yards in different climates from homeowners with different needs and taste. All of the yards look beautiful, and it's great to see how people craft outdoor living spaces without the conventional American Lawn.

The chapters include design inspirations from different styles of gardens (shade gardens, prairie gardens, play areas, patios, ponds, xeriscaping, edible gardens, etc), advice on how to design and build your own "no-mow yard," and plant lists to help you choose what to place where.

Overall, I am not sure that this book had a lot of new information for me and I wished the photos were brighter than the matte printing allowed for. There is a lot of inspiration here for someone starting to think about eliminating their lawnmower, and it's worth flipping through for the diversity of the gardens.

Sarah says

If someone asked how to subtitle this book, I'd say:

A Philosophical Companion to your Eco-yard.

As other readers noted, this book lacks any practical diagrams. And the plant list is just a tasting menu. Instead the author gives us a lovely, leisurely manifesto on why you should shrink your lawn - with several bulbs of wisdom on design --

Here's a design principle that I found especially winning:

Many gardeners fall in love with new plants and start out by planting one of these and one of those...

It may go against your grain to spread the plants that are thriving. They may seem too common or you may worry that they will take over and make the garden look too boring.

Really, the opposite is true. A site with characteristic plants will have a stronger personality than one with a bit of this and a bit of that. Those signature plants – the ones that are happy and abundant in your garden – help make it a recognizable, unique place.

Sharon says

The book contained a few pictures of houses with yards and many pictures of mounds of grass, ground

covers, and plants. I would have enjoyed this book more if it had included more pictures of the houses with the yards to show how the no-mow yards look.

Sarah says

Great ideas for inspiration, though the write-ups frequently gloss over the maintenance these yards will require. (And I'd love to find a book about wildlife-friendly landscapes that dares to mention ticks or deer.) Once I have the time and money to implement major changes to my yard I'll be coming back to this.

Amy says

A great inspiration for reducing or eliminating the American lawn. I thought some of the plant combinations were inspired, and I found some plants I had not previously considered. This book is best accessed as a gallery of design ideas, rather than a practical, DIY book. I'm planning to add this one to my garden design bookshelf.

Tia Rodriguez says

Great ideas and a lot of the yards she featured were in the few (and varied) locales I'd lived in, so lucky me. I'm giving it 3 stars, though, because I wish it had more/better pictures identifying the plants she talked about. I'm a gardening novice, so that may not be as big a deal to someone else.

Slee says

This book is a treasure trove of ideas, but the "honesty in photography" didn't lend itself well to selling the "beautiful" idea. A lot of it made me shudder to think what the village's code enforcement officer would have to say. As the book points out, not all things are appropriate for all places, and a lot of things in the book won't jibe with some people's municipal ordinances and HOA rules, and the inspiration pieces bear out how incongruent many of the ideas are.

It is likely that this just isn't what I was looking for in terms of inspiration, but I wasn't in love. Nevertheless, it is a good resource for planting ideas, so go ahead and pick it up, just don't expect to be thoroughly wowed pictorially.

Tracey says

Adult nonfiction; gardening. This book was ok, but was not really what I expected--text-heavy with few pictures, it sums up to: "These people have maintenance free yards, but if you want to do the same you should visit your local university/arboretum to find out what works in your area." If you want a book to gaze upon and dream upon, try instead: *Reimagining the California Lawn*, which has lots more pictures and plant

lists that you can then take to your local plant expert for the requisite consultation.

Jackie says

Poorly executed.

I am all in favor of reducing the amount of grass yards we have in suburban America. They don't do anyone a lick of good, they're not good for the environment, and they're boring as all get out. So I picked up this book already on board with the author's message. I expected to get a ton of beautiful pictures of yards without grass, design tips, and some basic information about plant types, etc. This book just didn't deliver on any of that.

The biggest problem I have with the book is that too many of the pictures are close-ups of plants rather than pictures of the whole yards. Not a single proper street-view picture of a house with a grass-free yard was included, and I yearned for one. You want American suburbanites to ditch their water-guzzling grass yards? Show us what that will look like! Don't just show me close ups of bushes and low growth ground cover. It's like if someone wrote an article about a kitchen reno but the only pictures are close-ups of the appliances; hard to get an idea of the layout or the overall effect. Very disappointing in the photography department.

The book was also extremely text-heavy without actually saying very much. Most of the book is written like a series of magazine articles highlighting a few yards (which again we don't get to see as a total) that aren't very informative. Most of the advice in this book comes down to, "no-grass yards are so much better and you should totally do it, but you're going to need to hire someone to tell you what kinds of plants are appropriate because it's very complicated". Also, the style of writing feels very dumbed down and you almost get the impression that the author might think you are stupid. The most informative section is probably the last in which various plants are grouped into categories and then listed encyclopedia style with a preferred habitat zone, description, and sun/water needs. You know, the kind of information you can just google.

This book just failed on a lot of levels, but there are bits and pieces here and there that are decent.

Brigette says

Some good ideas. I would have loved even more pictures, maybe before and after, with clearer help on what does well in different regions.
