

Edging

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I grew up in the country where lawn edging was accomplished by turning the goat loose to chew the weeds along the fence line. The sidewalk was the ditch, and the front lawn and road shared about 5 feet of neutral zone. During the winter, the road controlled the zone, while during the spring the lawn and weeds seized control. We didn't know what weed-eaters or edgers were. The straightest line on our property was maintained by the fruit trees.

Now that I live in the suburbs (I guess that's what they are called), edgers and weed-eaters are standard equipment, and everything has a nice line, except my fruit trees. Although it is more work, I have found that finished, neat edges make the difference in a landscape. A lawn area may look green and lush, but if the edges are uneven or untrimmed, the whole yard looks unkept.

Keeping the edges of a landscape trimmed does provide that finished, polished look, but they are usually the hardest areas of a landscape to maintain. Edges definitely require more time to trim when working around rocks, trees, flower beds, and fences.

The first rule to remember to reduce the time spent edging is remove and prevent grass from growing where it cannot be easily reached by a mower. Spray a non-selective herbicide such as Round-up or Finale, killing the grass and weeds around trees, fence posts, walls, and rocks. Leave a large grass-free zone around trees, and a smaller strip around rocks, fences and walls.

To prevent grass and weeds from returning, mix a pre-emergent herbicide such as Surflan with the Round-up. This kills existing weeds and deters germination for a few weeks.

The second option in this process is to design the area with a minimum of edging or trimming. This means, trees, shrubs and flowers should not be placed in the lawn, but in separate planting areas. Surround fences and rocks with an edging material or cement, to prevent weeds and grass from growing up in the fence, or around the rocks.

There are a number of materials that can be used as an edge around flower and shrub beds. Cement, redwood binder board, vinyl, rubber, bricks, and other materials all reduce the amount of trimming required. There is no perfect edging material. They all have their benefits and drawbacks.

I prefer black thick rubber edger which holds its shape for many years, but can be expensive. Cheaper vinyl and plastic products are inexpensive, but tend to lose their shape over time. Redwood does eventually wear out, but is very attractive and natural looking for many years. Cement, bricks, and other hard materials last for many years, but can also be costly. Cement edging appears cold in a landscape and makes it difficult to change the shape of beds. Bricks are usually very moveable, and can be too mobile at times.

There is another option for maintaining a clean appearance and keeping the grass in its place. Cut along the edge with a spade or shovel, leaving a 6 inch deep cut between the bed and the grass. A

small scoop shovel leaves a straighter edge. This process needs to be repeated two or three times a year and certainly creates more work when it comes time to mow.

For more information, contact your local [USU County Extension office](#).

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