If you want to help the environment and save some money you can adopt some practical ways to reduce gasoline use in your own backyard.

There are electric, battery and solar powered lawnmowers. Do you remember the non-motorized reel mower? Or you could use sheep, though you may receive a call from your homeowner’s association or code enforcement. But most of us have gasoline powered mowers. On average, it takes one gallon of gasoline to mow an acre. There are approximately 5 million acres of home lawns in Florida. Mowing each of these lawns twenty times per year would result in the use of 100 million gallons of gas per year. That’s 380 million dollars at $3.80 per gallon gas. These are conservative figures.

Be smart as to where you grow grass. Use grass where it serves a purpose. Concentrate your efforts in growing grass where it will grow. It’s normal for lawns to decline in close proximity to large trees. As a lawn gives way to tree competition, do something else in that area. Use mulch under trees or plant shade tolerant plants.

Fertilize smart. Too much fertilizer, especially nitrogen, results in excessive grass growth that requires more mowing. Most homeowners overdo it with too much nitrogen and too little potassium. Fertilizers with the correct ratios of nitrogen and potassium will produce the right balance of shoot to root growth. Choose a fertilizer such as 15-0-15 or some similar analysis with slow release nitrogen. Fertilize to produce adequate growth and the correct color. If your lawn is a healthy green and you’re mowing, mowing, mowing, why add more fertilizer?
There are many centipede lawns that get by with no fertilizer. When they are mowed, the clippings are left on the lawn and return nutrients to the soil. St. Augustinegrass usually requires at least one application of fertilizer per year, after green-up in spring. However, it’s more common to apply a second application in August or September.

Never apply more than the recommended amount of fertilizer per application. But you can always split the total amount into two or more applications, which will produce more even growth and minimize sudden growth spurts.

Reconsider overseeding your lawn with ryegrass this fall. Weigh the desire to have a green lawn through winter with the extra time and costs (gas, fertilizer, water, pesticides, etc.) involved with maintaining it.

Finally, keep your gas powered lawnmower in good working condition. It can make a difference in how efficiently it operates. Make sure the equipment is clean. Change the oil as recommended. Replace or clean the air filter and spark plug. Keep lawnmower blades sharp. Basically, follow the owner’s manual for routine maintenance.

Implementing these ideas will help conserve fuel and result in a healthier lawn.