

## From Lawn to Garden: Transforming Landscapes and Perspectives

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**Background:**

- Lawns provide little to no ecological benefit but have numerous environmental drawbacks.
- Gardens with native and edible plants are a more conscious use of space and provide many benefits.
- America needs to shift its land usage away from lawns towards more conscious and sustainable resource usage.

**Thesis:**

America needs to shift its land use away from lawns and towards gardens in order to engage in more conscious use of resources in the era of climate change.

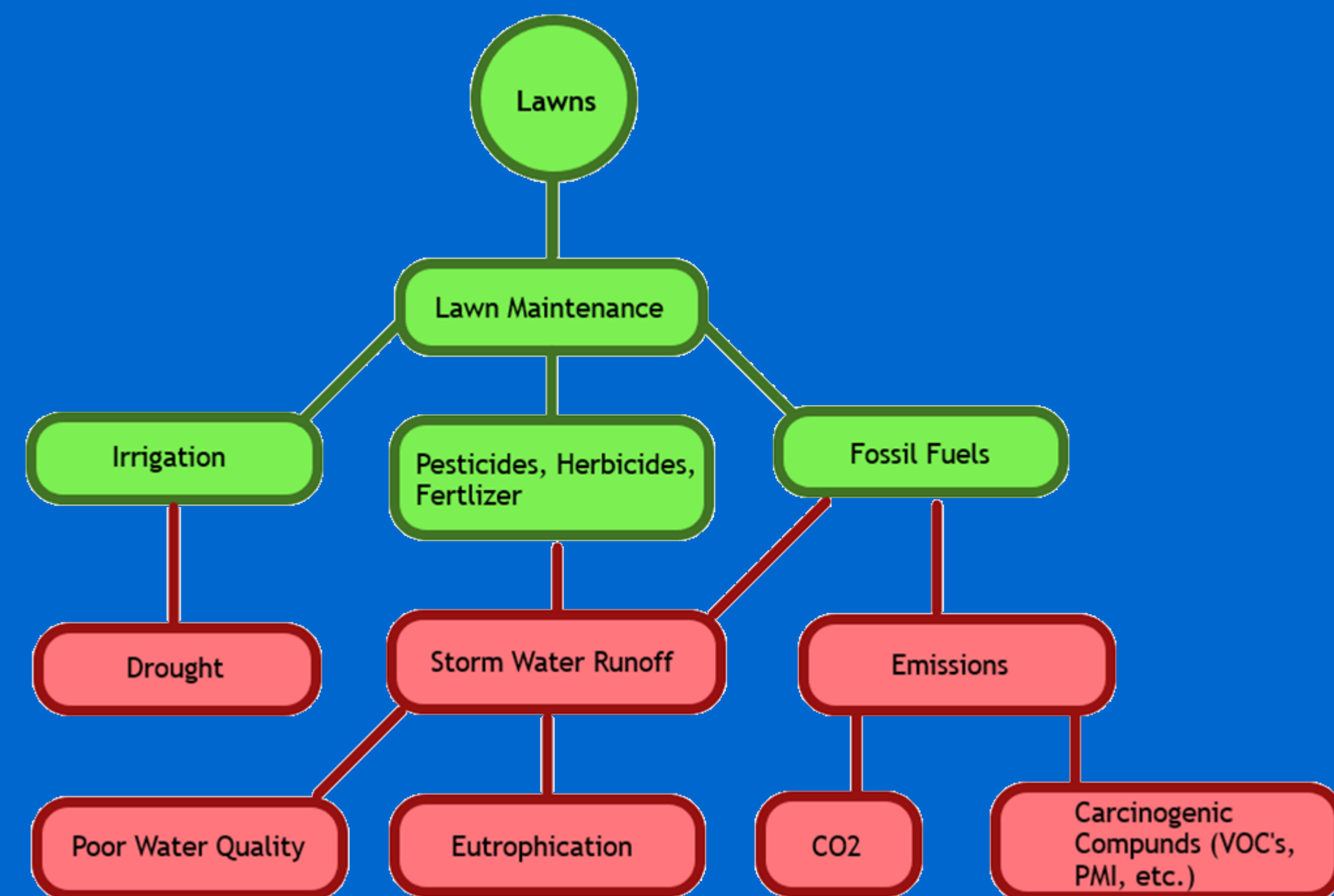


Figure 1: A systems map demonstrating the externalities caused by lawns.

**Internship and Methods:**

- I interned at Cultivate Seattle, a small local business that specializes in transforming lawns into gardens with native PNW plants.
- I engaged in the process of lawn-to-garden transformation
- I conducted a literature review of a variety of sources to understand the impacts of lawns and the benefits of gardens

**The True Cost of Lawns:**

- Americans spend over \$23 billion annually on lawn care and maintenance
- Water consumption = 60% of American West's water (30% nationally); 9 billion gallons per day.
- Pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers
- Gas-powered lawn and garden equipment (GLGE's) contribute 242 million tons of air pollutants each year



Image Credit: Mara Silgailis, cleanwateraction.org, March 16 2016. Retrieved May 23 2022.

**Saved by the Garden:**

- Intensive garden cultivation could reduce urban carbon emissions by up to 6%\*
- Native plants require less resources
- Urban gardens = less importing of food
- Gardening is beneficial for physical and mental health
- Property owners must shift their perspectives towards becoming "urban land stewards"



Figure 2: The stages of lawn transition. (Left) A traditional lawn, (Middle) cardboard is laid down to kill grass, and will eventually decompose into mulch, (Right) flowers blooming in the new garden.

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