

How to be a Green Gardener

WHY? While it might not be obvious, gardening practices can affect the environment. If not correctly planned, even the smallest garden can create erosion and pollution issues. Green gardening attempts to minimize the negative impact of gardening on the environment and promotes a positive relationship with the ecosystem.

HOW? There are a number of ways you can be a green gardener. The goal of this guide is to provide you with a quick reference on how to do just that. Below you will find a list of the best green gardening practices with helpful links for more in-depth explanations and resources for you to use.

1. Match plants to climate and soil conditions

There are some plants that won't grow in certain soil types and environmental conditions. Trying to do so could be a waste of time, money, and materials. Be sure to plan ahead for the types of plant you want to grow and when.

- [Native Plant guide](#)
- [Northwest Natural Yard and Garden](#)
- [Growing Warm Season Vegetables in the PNW](#)
- [Fruit and Vegetable Seasons of the PNW](#)

2. Use natural fertilizers

Chemicals commonly used in off-the-shelf fertilizers and pesticides, can be toxic and have detrimental impact on the environment's ecological balance. They can accumulate to harmful amounts in the garden soil over time, wiping out beneficial organisms. Try using natural fertilizers when possible.

- [Homemade Garden Fertilizers](#)
- [Organic Garden Fertilizers](#)

3. Protect plants without pesticides

Keep an eye out for hazardous symbols displayed on the labels. Try for an alternative that is more environmentally considerate. Pesticides and herbicides can get into the food chain working their way up through insects to birds and rodents, harming the balance of our local ecosystems.

- [Natural Insecticides](#)
- [Natural Pesticides](#)
- [Eco-Gardening Tips](#)

4. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

You want to reduce your output of waste to ensure you're using materials efficiently. Reusing compost and tree clippings for mulch, or rainwater for watering take up little time and energy, but offer plenty of environmental bang for your buck. Recycling saves resources.

- [Great Gardening: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – Rethink](#)
- [Landscape for Life](#)
- [3 R's in the Garden ideas](#)

5. Be water wise

In spite of our rainy reputation, it's not unusual for western Washington to see very little rainfall in mid to late summer, even in "wet years." And as our population grows, so does the demand on our limited water resources. So conserving water through choice of plants, soil preparation and watering techniques is the wise thing to do.

- [Water-Wise Garden Tips](#)
- [8 Steps to a Water-Wise Garden](#)
- [King County Saving Water Partnership](#)

6. Bring on the butterflies, bees and birds

Bees are essential for pollinating flowers and food. However, bees are in danger from a loss of habitat and chemicals that are reducing their population numbers. Provide a pesticide-free sanctuary for our pollinator pals.

- [Bee-Friendly Gardening](#)
- [Bee-Friendly Plants](#)
- [Friends of the Earth](#)