



# Sustainable Gardening

## NURTURE WILDLIFE



- ▶ **Provide food and habitat for insects and birds** by leaving parts of your garden and lawn 'wild' and provide a source of drinking water.  
<https://davidsuzuki.org/living-green/messy-yards-help-bees/>
- ▶ **Incorporate some native plants** into your landscape.  
<https://davidsuzuki.org/living-green/how-to-attract-pollinators/>
- ▶ **Grow a wide variety of species** to diversify food sources for insects and birds.
- ▶ **Select plant varieties** that are resistant to the region's diseases and pests.
- ▶ **Practice natural pest management** to support beneficial insects and not use insecticides.  
<http://www.mgabc.org/content/natural-pest-management>



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## LIGHTEN YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

- ▶ **Grow food** – it helps to reduce packaging, transportation and give you a terrific sense of satisfaction. “Greenhouse gas emissions can be cut by 2 kilograms for every kilo of homegrown vegetable when compared to the store-bought counterpart.” <https://www.news.ucsb.edu/2016/017071/how-does-your-garden-grow>
- ▶ **Make your garden a carbon sink. Leave ancient carbon in the ground.**
  - Plants store carbon – especially shrubs and trees.
  - Convert kitchen and garden waste into compost. Use it as mulch and soil amendment. You don’t even need to dig it in! If space for a bin is limited, try vermicomposting or trench composting. <https://www.audubon.org/news/the-hidden-carbon-trap-your-garden-its-all-about-soil>.
  - Peatlands are storehouses of carbon. Mining peat for garden and other uses releases this carbon into the atmosphere. Choose to garden without peat. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/peat>
- ▶ **Conserve energy. Reduce fossil fuel use.**
  - Ditch gas-powered garden tools and replace with those that use muscle power, or, if necessary, electricity. Look for good used equipment.
  - Choose biodegradable packaging rather than plastic when purchasing nursery products,
  - Only fertilize if your soil needs it (a soil test can help). Choose ‘natural’ or ‘organic’ products. Synthetic fertilizers require significant amounts of fossil fuel to manufacture, and they can potentially damage your soil’s ecosystem. <https://www.audubon.org/news/your-yard-stealthy-fossil-fuel-guzzler-give-it-climate-makeover>
  - Propagate. Grow from seeds rather than purchased seedlings in plastic pots. Save whatever plastic pots you have for all types of home propagation.
  - Landscape design can reduce your energy consumption. Heat or cool your home by planting trees strategically.



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## BE WATER-WISE



- ▶ **Use water sensibly.** Metro Vancouver is increasingly prone to high summer temperatures and water scarcity. Besides being wasteful, excessive watering can wash away soil and its nutrients, and pollute natural waterways and their inhabitants.
- ▶ **Choose plants that are adapted** to wet months but can survive with minimal water in the summer.
  - Group plants according to their water requirement
  - Established plants require less water than newly planted ones
  - Water deeply rather than frequently
  - Water according to need, rather than on a set schedule. Learn the early signs of dehydration for each of your plants.
- ▶ **Mulch to aid soil water retention.**
- ▶ **Conserve water by irrigating** with in-ground, drip hoses, or hand watering, in early morning to avoid evaporation loss. If you have an irrigation system, test it regularly and keep it properly maintained.
- ▶ **Consider removing hard surfaces** to make space for more plant growth and rain absorption.
- ▶ **Use water barrels to store rainwater.**



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## PROTECT YOUR SOIL AND THE LIFE WITHIN IT

- ▶ **Use compost and organic mulches** (e.g. leaves, herbaceous plant debris, wood chips) to help keep soil moist, cool, oxygenated, and nutrient-rich – enabling microorganisms and invertebrates to flourish. These soil companions are essential for healthy plant growth. In addition, keep your soil covered with year-round plantings to avoid erosion.
- ▶ **Create garden pathways** to reduce compaction of soil around plantings.

