

Climate-Friendly Gardening

Growing into Action

Climate change affects our ability to grow for beautification and provide food. The impacts of climate change, such as drought and extreme weather, bring stresses to our plants. They can also allow new invasive species and pests, which do not belong, to thrive in our gardens.

As gardeners, we can be apart of the solution. We can consider our footprint in the garden, the function of our garden, and the practices that we carry out from the root and up. Here's a look at climate-friendly gardening!



LOW EMISSION INPUTS

Some tools and chemicals can affect the amount of greenhouse gases emitted and absorbed in your garden.

Get hands-on! Use human power and manual tools where possible. Tone down the use of synthetic chemicals, and opt for compost, worm castings, and manure to nourish your plants. Save your organic waste (like fruit and veggie scraps) for municipal compost or your own, depending on regulations. For pesticides, consider organic options like neem oil, insecticidal soap and powders and sprays from natural *Bt* bacteria.

In next year's garden, consider making a sheet compost or "lasagna garden" of alternating carbon and nitrogen material. It is a great growing medium. Try planting cover crops in between growing seasons to maintain soil health and reduce weeds.

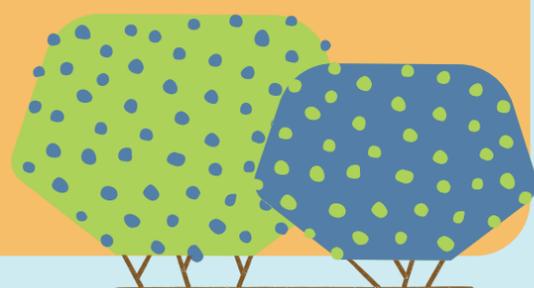


BE WATER-WISE

To reduce water demand, try adjusting your watering schedule to when less water will evaporate. Apply water slowly to the base of the plant, so it absorbs into the soil near the root system.

Pick plants wisely. Explore gardening with minimal water use or xeriscaping, which uses plants adapted to dry habitats. Consider adding compost, organic material, or mulch to keep water in the soil longer.

On top of this, try to help reduce run-off by building a rain garden. This will support stormwater management and allow excess water to infiltrate as precipitation patterns change.



ENCOURAGE BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity underpins our food systems. We can help support biodiversity in our changing climate by providing food, water, and space for living things. Create a pollinator-friendly garden. Include native flowers and plants. They should flower at different times, so there are blooms over the season.

Avoid planting invasive species and prevent their spread by monitoring and removing them.

Try the age-old tradition of companion planting to promote pest control, wildlife, and other mutual benefits.

CHOOSE TREES AND SHRUBS

Plant trees, shrubs and other perennials, and multiple if you have space. Did you know trees help to reduce heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere? They store more carbon dioxide than smaller plants, and for a longer time. By planting perennials, we can reduce soil disturbance and required labour since they do not need to be replanted each year.

Trees also provide shade in the summer and protection from winter winds. With ideal placement, we can reduce our energy consumption for heating and cooling!

GROW FOOD AND SAVE SEEDS

Food travels far! Reduce your food miles by growing some of your own fruits and vegetables. Save seeds from your healthiest plants. Annual, open-pollinated crops like tomatoes and beans are easy to start with. See Seeds of Diversity's resources for more information!

