

Steps to gardening sustainably

Useful links:

[To Learn More](#)

Companion planting.

Permaculture Research Institute, permaculturenews.org; search for companion planting chart.

Water-wise gardening.

University of Minnesota Extension, extension.umn.edu; search for water-wise yard.

Making soil blocks.

Urban Homestead, urbanhomestead.org; search for soil blocks.

Gravel gardens.

University of Wisconsin, extension.wisc.edu; search for gravel gardens.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison, Wisconsin

<http://www.olbrich.org/>

Fine Fescue lawns

<https://lowinputturf.umn.edu/other-fine-fescue-research-university-minnesota-bee-lawns>

Make your own peat-free soil

Excerpt from Hennepin County Master Gardener's article

You'll save money if you make your own peat-free potting soil. And it's easiest to buy your ingredients and mix them in a wheelbarrow before filling your containers. Here are a few recipes that are easy, affordable and still offer good drainage.

For seedlings:

- 1 part compost
- 2 parts coconut coir
- 1 part builder's (sharp) sand

For ornamental plants:

- 1 part coconut coir (follow package directions for wetting the coir before use)
- 1 part compost
- 1 part good garden topsoil
- 1 part builder's sand or perlite

For edibles:

- 2 parts compost
- 2 parts coconut coir
- 1 part builder's sand

Keep in mind that compost makes a good slow-release fertilizer. But container-grown plants, especially edibles, will need additional nutrients throughout the season. Some good choices include: additional compost, bone meal, vermicompost (worm poo), fish emulsion and alfalfa meal.

4 Eco-Friendly Water Sources for Your Garden and Yard

By GlobalGardenFriends on Aug 25, 2019 10:16 am

Keeping your yards and plants alive could require thousands of gallons of water per year, and that water usage is going to have a major impact on the environment. While there are some steps that you can take to make your plants hardier, you might also want to think about switching over to eco-friendly water sources.

Rain Barrels

Setting up a few rain barrels is very easy to do, and this simple project could provide you with hundreds of gallons of water per year. To install one of those systems, all you will need to do is place a few heavy plastic barrels near the ends of your rain gutters. Some home improvement stores even sell rain barrel kits that come with extended water channels, spigots, and barrel stands.

A Water Well

If you live in an area that has quite a bit of groundwater, then you might also want to consider digging a well. There are many different types of wells to choose from, and most counties don't have strict laws regarding those projects as long as the water isn't for human consumption. In addition to drilling into the ground, you will also need to take a look at [residential water well pumps](#). For landscaping, a relatively small pump should be fine.

Old Water Bottles

You probably won't be able to keep your lawn green with old water bottles, but that extra water can easily be used on a few plants. The average person purchases hundreds of water bottles per year, and the extra water at the bottom of those bottles doesn't need to go to waste. That being said, single-use water bottles are very bad for the environment, and you should avoid them if you are trying to reduce your carbon footprint.

Graywater From Around Your Home

Graywater is any type of water waste that doesn't have fecal contaminants, and most homes produce quite a bit of it every year. Whenever it comes time to clean out your aquarium or do a few dishes, the extra water can easily be tossed over your plants. As long as the water doesn't contain any chemical cleaners or toxic materials, it should be perfectly safe for your landscaping.

In addition to switching over to eco-friendly water sources, you might also want to think about planting native species. Regional species usually require less water, and keeping them alive is going to be much easier.

MAKE YOUR OWN SOIL BLOCKS RECIPE

This recipe fills a plastic paint bucket. Works best if made ahead of time and allowed to stand for several weeks before using.

- 3 parts milled peat moss or coir or vermiculite
- 1/16 part pulverized dolomitic lime
- 2 parts perlite
- ½ part dry organic all purpose plant food (the finer textured the better)
- 1 part garden soil (right out of your garden)
- 2 parts high-quality finished compost

Need a soil block maker, mix, water and tray for the blocks.

For more information:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/soil-blocks/>

<https://www.johnnyseeds.com/growers-library/tools-supplies/soil-block-makers-eliot-coleman.html>

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