

Sustainable Gardening

Here is a checklist of some of the things that make up sustainable gardening

I. A sustainable gardener conserves water by:

1. Mulching around plants
2. Applying water only as needed according to soil conditions, plant age and type
3. Using soaker hoses or drip irrigation

II. A sustainable gardener designs by:

1. Clustering plants with similar needs together
2. Placing the part of the garden requiring the most care closest to the house
3. Taking advantage of microclimates
4. Incorporating edible plants in the landscape
5. Planting with wildlife in mind

III. A sustainable gardener attends to soil tilth by:

1. Composting garden and household vegetable matter
2. Protecting the soil from erosion
3. Defining walkways and driveways to prevent compacting the soil
4. Mulching by using readily available materials like straw, compost or gravel
5. Revitalize soil with organic fertilizers and compost

IV. A sustainable gardener chooses plants that:

1. Attract beneficial insects
2. Are non-invasive (each county has invasive species lists)
3. Are appropriate to the area's climate like natives and their friends (or related ornamentals that blend with the surrounding landscape)
4. Can be maintained with less use of power tools
5. Are for texture and multi-season interest
6. Are grown locally whenever possible

V. A sustainable garden conserves the gardener's energy by:

1. Using the leaves that fall as mulch on the beds
2. Appreciating a plant's natural form and planting the right size plant in the right place
3. Understanding the role of insects in the garden
4. Tolerating minor imperfections
5. Using mulch to reduce weeding and prevent disease
6. Returning plant pots to nurseries who will reuse them