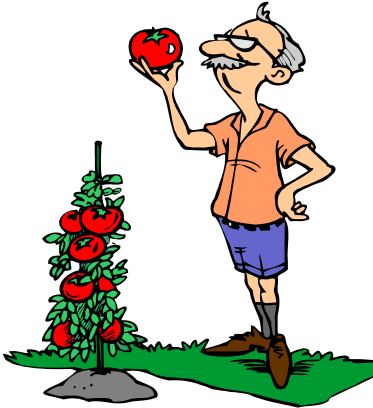




Resourceful News

Resource conservation and pollution prevention tips for home and work.



Natural Lawn & Garden Care

Natural lawn and garden practices are the basics of good gardening: working with nature to grow healthy plants that thrive in your landscape, naturally. Below are 6 practices that require less water and chemicals – leaving more water in streams for fish and wildlife, and reducing the amount of polluted runoff that can damage our lakes, creeks and Puget Sound.

❖ **Grow Healthy Soil**

Healthy soil is the single most important element of a garden. Good soil absorbs water easily, drains well and retains moisture. Mix compost into the soil when planting and mulch established beds with organic material each year to improve your soil.

❖ **Choose the Right Plants**

When you grow plants in the appropriate conditions, they thrive with minimal care. By choosing plants well adapted to each garden situation, you save time and money, reduce maintenance, help prevent pests and diseases, and leave more clean water for salmon and other wildlife. Plan now and enjoy the benefits for years to come.

❖ **Water Efficiently**

Drip irrigation is the best way to water most plantings except lawns. Drip systems apply water directly to the soil with minimal evaporation or runoff. They also help prevent plant diseases and make watering gardens easier.

❖ **Control Pests, Weeds & Disease Naturally**

Less than 1% of garden insects damage plants. The following steps will help you manage your pests naturally: 1) create a healthy garden to stop pest problems before they start, 2) identify pests before you spray, stomp or squash, 3) give nature a chance to work, and 4) use the least toxic pest controls available.

❖ **Compost at Home**

Composting yard waste and kitchen scraps is one of the best and easiest things you can do to reduce waste and grow a healthy, sustainable garden. Using compost in your garden recycles nutrients and organic matter that help grow trouble-free plants with less water, fertilizer or pesticides. Compost also builds healthy soil that absorbs and filters runoff, protecting streams from erosion and pollution.

❖ **Care for Your Lawn Naturally**

The following 6 steps will help you grow a healthy, natural lawn: 1) mow high, mow often and leave the clippings, 2) fertilize moderately in September & May with a natural organic or “slow-release” fertilizer, 3) water deeply to moisten the root zone, 4) improve poor lawns with aeration and overseeding, 5) think twice before using pesticides or weed-and-feed, and 6) consider alternatives to lawns for steep slopes, shady areas or near streams and lakes.

For more detailed information on these topics, visit Seattle Public Utilities’ “Natural Lawn and Garden Care” Web site at <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/util/RESCONS/plantNaturally/default.htm> or call the Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline at (206) 633-0224.