GREEN GARDENING

The concept of “Green Gardening” takes a fresh look at landscaping principles through the lens of different environmental issues in order to create a sustainable landscape for years to come. Here are just a few items to consider when greening your garden.

Set Your Goals. When designing your landscape, keep your goal in mind. Is your goal to grow food, attract pollinators, have year-round color, create a relaxing outdoor sanctuary, or a different goal?

Plan for Stormwater. When planning your landscape, consider ways to reduce run-off and retain rainwater on site by redirecting down spouts to landscape areas, incorporating rain gardens, dry creek beds or swales, permeable pavements, and adding rain barrels to your garden. To keep soil and mulch onsite, create borders around your landscape so they are not washed away by rain or wind.

Optimize Water Efficiency. When planning or updating your landscape, consider plant water needs. Hydrozoning, grouping plants by water usage, ensures that plants receive the appropriate amount of water. Consider switching your irrigation system to drip irrigation to provide water directly to plants. Always check that your irrigation system is functioning properly and repair any broken or misaligned sprinkler heads. Adding a laundry to landscape greywater system is an option to use an alternative water supply and reduce your landscapes overall potable water use. With a laundry to landscape system, water is discharged directly from the washing machine though a discharge hose to outdoor landscapes.

Choose Green Materials. Green building materials can be incorporated into your landscape. Consider using reused lumber for planting beds, wood chips from tree removal companies and other reused, recycled or sustainable building materials. Building sustainable soils will help to ensure the continued health of your landscape. Prior to planting, incorporate compost, manures and/or other natural fertilizers into your soil to provide needed nutrients for plant growth. Use mulch to increase soil water retention, to keep soil and plant roots cool and to reduce weeds. Look for natural and less-toxic pest control options at OurWaterOurWorld.org.

Consider Wildlife. Landscapes can also serve as wildlife corridors and encourage beneficial species. Consider pollinator plants that help support native bees, butterflies and birds. Install bat and/or barn owl boxes to encourage them on site. Bats can help to keep insects under control and barn owls help to control rodent populations.

Reduce Garden Waste. When choosing plants, consider how much work you want to put into maintaining your landscape and the amount of yard trimmings different landscapes might generate. To minimize maintenance work, select plants that grow more slowly and don’t require frequent pruning. Be sure to choose the right plant for the space available. Placing a large plant in a small area results in more frequent pruning and unnecessary waste. Sometimes landscapes are treated like a crop—we cultivate it, fertilize it, water it...then “harvest it” (via mowing or pruning) just to toss it away.

“Leaf” it Onsite. If you do have leaves and other yard trimmings, consider “leafing” it onsite and using it as an alternative to mulch. Instead of bagging grass clippings, try using the mulch feature on your mower. Mulch mowing chops grass into such tiny pieces that they fall between the blades of grass and are recycled
back into the soil. You may also want to try composting yard trimmings on site as part of a backyard compost pile.

To learn more about green gardening, join City of Davis Environmental Resources staff every Wednesday evening in April for a free series of galactically incredible classes that promise to be out of this world! (or at the very least they will be entertaining and instructive). Find more green gardening information and resource links at GreenerDavis.org and SaveDavisWater.org (under Helpful Links).

April 4: Live long and compost -- Redwood Building, 1001 Anderson Road
A galactically amazing class on various composting methods.

April 11: Make it sow -- Davis Senior Center Activity Room, 646 A Street
An engaging green gardening 101 class.

April 18: To plant establishment...and beyond! – Davis Senior Center Activity Room, 646 A Street
A stellar class on water-wise landscaping and irrigation.

April 25: May the trees be with you -- Redwood Building, 1001 Anderson Road
A class on tree care and irrigation.

Classes begin at 6:30 p.m. and run for 1 to 1 ½ hours. Davis residents who attend a class can enter to win prizes, including reusable shopping bags, waterless car wash kits and worm castings. For more information or to register, e-mail PWWeb@CityofDavis.org or call (530) 757-5686.

Upcoming Events
Compost and Mulch Giveaway Event: Saturday, April 14 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Faraday Ave. Compost and mulch is available for free on a first-come first-served basis. This event is for Davis residents only, ID will be checked. Only one vehicle per household, return trips are not allowed. Please note that vehicles will NOT be permitted to back up directly to the piles for loading. Residents must bring their own shovels, gunny sacks, wheel barrows, etc. to move and load compost and mulch into their vehicles as none will be provided. See DavisRecycling.org for details.

Bulky Items Drop-off: Friday, April 13 from 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. and Saturday, April 14 from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. at Davis Waste Removal (2727 2nd Street). See DavisRecycling.org for details.

Arboretum Plant Sales: April 29 and May 12 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Visit Arboretum.UCDavis.edu for more information.

Filter Exchange Event: On April 29, Davis residents can recycle a used oil filter at O’Reilly Auto Parts, 1681 Research Park Drive and receive a new, comparable one for free! Limit 2 per resident. Funded by a grant from CalRecycle. For more information, visit GreenerDavis.org.

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