



The Top 10 Things a Home Gardener Can Do to Save the Planet

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What environmental factors affect the health of our planet?

Pollution/Greenhouse gases



Loss of forests

Polluted waterways/
Waste water runoff

Overuse of chemicals,
pesticides, etc.

Waste disposal/
Overloaded landfills

Overuse of natural resources

10. Maintain healthy soil

How does this help save the planet?

- Healthy soil provides more hospitable growing medium for your trees, shrubs, flowers and vegetables
- Reduces stress, minimizes pests and diseases
- Maintains plant health
- Absorbs water, drains well



10. Maintain healthy soil

What do I need to do?

- Conduct a soil test – available at the Cooperative Extension office
- Make modifications to nutrients, pH as directed by soil test
- Amend the soil with compost to improve soil texture, drainage, and water absorption



9. Grow Something to Eat

How does this help save the planet?

- Reduces commercial pesticide use, assuming you don't use more pesticides than commercial growers do
- Engages children in learning about the environment, and taking responsibility for understanding what it takes to grow what you eat.
- Enables consumers to know exactly what they are eating and how they have been handled
- Reduces waste from containers you would have purchased the food in and saves energy from transporting it



9. Grow Something to Eat

What do I need to do?

- Prepare a small plot of amended soil; or use container
- Purchase seeds (lettuce, spinach, radishes, peas, green beans) or starter plants (tomatoes, peppers, eggplant) to start your garden
- Follow directions on seed packet; plant after risk of frost
- Thin seedlings as directed; keep plot weeded and watered
- Fertilize with fish emulsion fertilizer every month
- Once plants begin bearing fruit, keep picking to extend season.

8. Plant a Tree

How does this help save the planet?

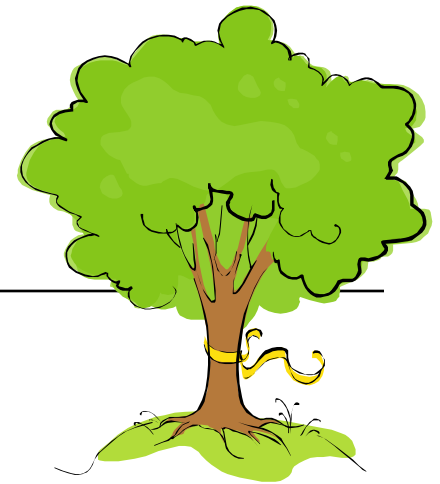
Trees absorb carbon/CO₂ and return oxygen to the air; helps reduce 'greenhouse effect'

Trees shade your home, reducing AC costs, helps save energy

Trees protect your home from winter winds, reducing heating costs, helps save energy



8. Plant a Tree



What do I need to do?

- Find location away from buildings, power lines, etc.
- Select appropriate tree considering the location, complementary species with existing trees, desired size, and disease resistance. Consult a professional.
- Dig hole approx twice the diameter of the root ball, and about the same depth.
- Root flare should be at surface level. Do not plant too deeply.
- Backfill with original soil. Do not fertilize for 1 year.
- Water well, and water regularly for at least 1 year.
- Mulch no deeper than 3" and keep mulch away from tree trunk.

** Be sure to contact utility companies before digging!*

7. Conserve Water

How does this help save the planet?

- Preserve valuable natural resources
- Help protect against drought-induced water shortages

7. Conserve Water

What do I need to do?

- Measure rainfall and only water when necessary.
- Minimize lawn watering. Grass will go dormant during drought periods, encourage deep root growth
- Mulch garden areas to minimize evaporation
- Use plants that are drought tolerant; need minimal supplemental moisture
- Turn off faucets/hoses after use; fix leaks
- Use drip hoses, or direct watering to minimize waste.
- If you must use a sprinkler, use only in evening or early morning and use a timer or set an alarm to remind you to turn off. Measure with a tuna or cat food can. (1")

6. Use Native Plants

How does this help save the planet?

- Utilizing materials native to your area minimizes watering requirements, pesticide use, and improves likelihood of success
- Sustains biodiversity



6. Use Native Plants

What do I need to do?

- Evaluate your landscape for possible invasive, non-native species
- Consider replacing plants that routinely require pesticides to battle pests, or require excessive coddling to stay alive
- Select from a wide variety of native plants, that will not only be easier to grow but support wildlife needs, as well

5. Create a habitat for Wildlife

How does this help save the planet?

- Helps preserve our already threatened and often endangered species
- Engages children in learning about and appreciating wildlife

'up close and personal'



5. Create a habitat for Wildlife

What do I need to do?

- Provide the 'basics' needed by all wildlife:
 - Shelter
 - Food
 - Water
 - Place to raise young
- Minimize open lawn space and replace some areas with wildflower meadow, trees, shrubs



4. Keep your Rainwater on your property

How does this help save the planet?

- Reduces storm water runoff,
 - which contributes to flooding and erosion
 - Storm water picks up fertilizers, and other chemicals along its route, resulting in pollution of our drinking water sources
 - Runoff water is also higher temperature than groundwater, which carries less oxygen into lakes, streams, affecting fish other wildlife
- Helps conserve water, by using available rainfall to support moisture needs of your own property

4. Keep your Rainwater on your property

What do I need to do?

- Capture rainwater from roof runoff into downspout rain barrels; use water for garden watering
- Create a chemical-free buffer zone between your yard and any water drainage areas (ditch, creek, stream, etc.)
- Consider installing a rain garden in your low lying areas where water drains slowly after heavy rain.
- Plant moisture-loving trees, and other native plants to soak up water and create a natural percolation for improved drainage

What would you do if you saw these in your garden?



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3. Nurture Pollinators and Beneficial Insects

How does this help save the planet?

- Honeybees and other pollinators are at serious risk due to disease, pesticide use, and loss of habitat
- Loss of pollinators threatens crops, availability of fruits and vegetables, leading to food shortages
- Beneficials help with pest management without use of pesticides; maintain 'nature's balance'

3. Nurture Pollinators and Beneficial Insects

What do I need to do?

- Plant a wide variety of pollen and nectar-rich flowers
- Look for early blooming flowers; necessary to feed/shelter beneficials until insect prey are available
- Select plants of different heights, sizes, bloom times
- Limit use of pesticides in your garden

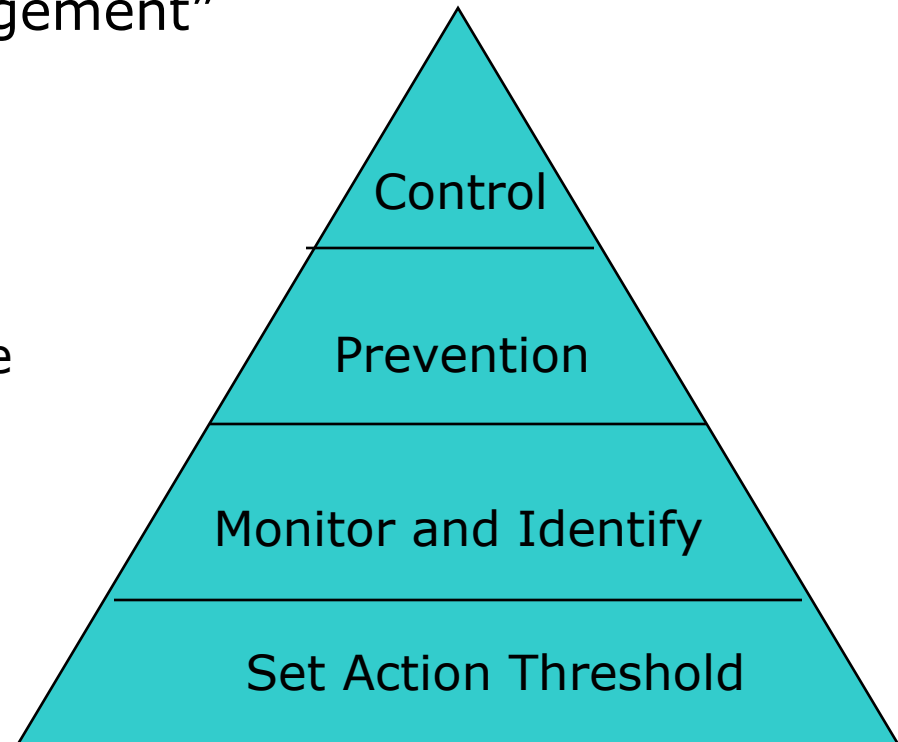


2. Practice “IPM”

How does this help save the planet?

- “Integrated Pest Management”

Pest control using the least risky methods available and exhausting all options before using chemical interventions.



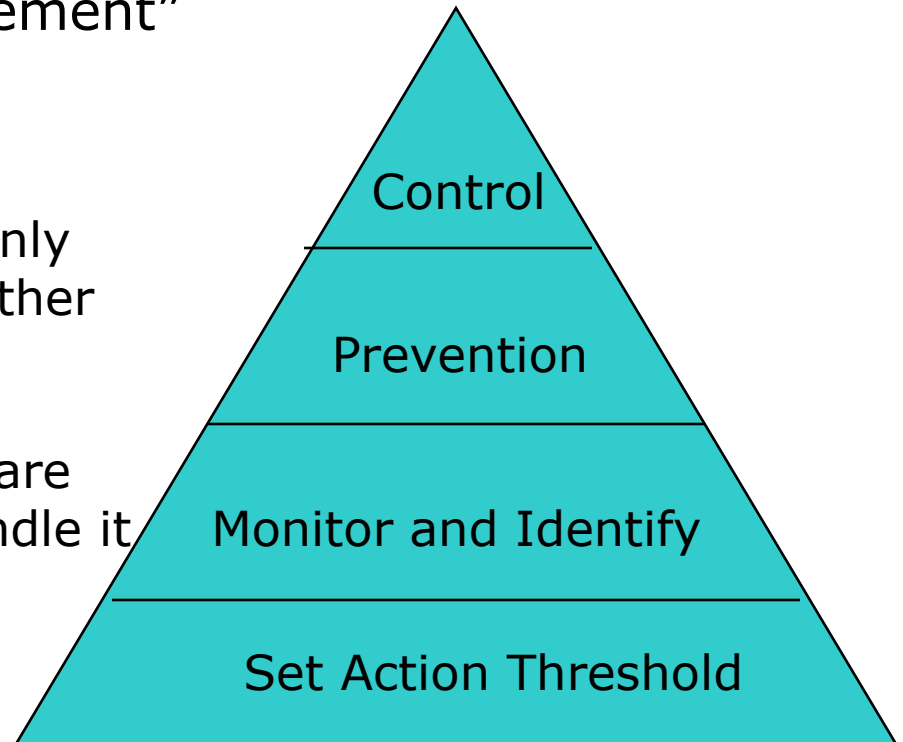
2. Practice “IPM”

What do I need to do?

- “Integrated Pest Management”

Limit use of chemical pesticides only when absolutely needed and all other options have failed.

Be sure you know what pest you are dealing with, and how to best handle it.



Is this how you would handle an ant problem in your house?



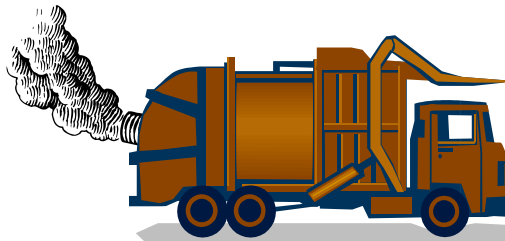
1. Compost

What is compost?

- All natural soil amendment, mulch
- Alternative to inorganic fertilizers
- Improves soil structure, aeration, structure, and ability to retain moisture
- Loosens clay soils
- Puts your yard and kitchen waste to 'good use'

1. Compost

How does this help save the planet?



Reduce waste, preserve limited landfill space, improve the soil, enhance plant health..

1. Compost

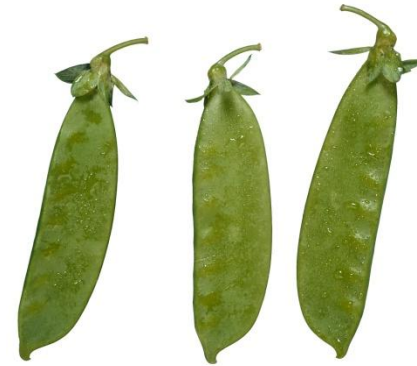
How do we make compost?



Brown Stuff
(carbon rich)



+



Green Stuff
(nitrogen rich)

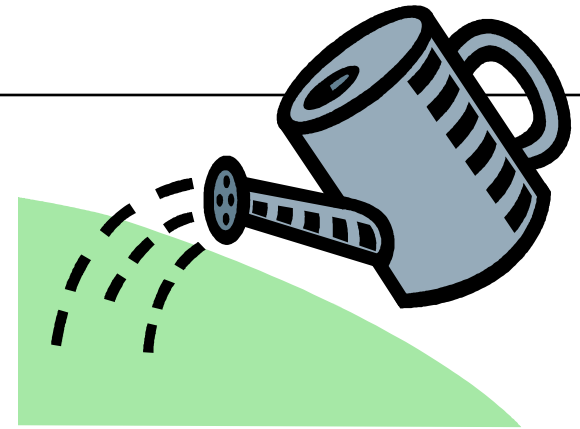


30 parts Brown to.....

1 part Green

1. Compost

What do I need to do?



Keep Moist

Mix frequently to add oxygen to the mix to speed decomposition

Compost is ready when black and crumbly

30 parts Brown to.....

1 part Green

Top 10 Things YOU can do...

1. Compost, compost, compost
2. Practice IPM – Integrated Pest Mgmt
3. Nurture Pollinators, Beneficial insects
4. Keep Rainwater on your property
5. Create Wildlife habitat
6. Use Native Plants
7. Conserve water
8. Plant a tree
9. Grow something to eat
10. Maintain healthy soil



Pick at least
1 thing and
DO IT



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