

Eco-Friendly and Economical: 10 Sustainable Gardening Hacks



In today's world, the importance of sustainable living has never been more pronounced. As we face environmental challenges, the concept of eco-friendly and economical gardening practices has emerged as a beacon of hope for both our planet and our pockets. Here's a look at 10 sustainable gardening hacks that not only contribute to a greener earth but also offer significant savings. By integrating these practices, gardeners can cultivate thriving gardens that are both kind to the environment and easy on the wallet.

1. Composting: Turning Waste into

Wealth



Composting is a cornerstone of sustainable gardening. By transforming kitchen scraps, lawn clippings, and other organic waste into nutrient-rich compost, you not only reduce landfill contributions but also provide your plants with a natural, chemical-free fertilizer. This process, which mimics nature's own recycling system, enriches the soil, fosters healthy plant growth, and minimizes the need for synthetic fertilizers, leading to a more vibrant and sustainable garden ecosystem.

2. Water Wisdom: Harvesting and Conserving H2O



Water conservation is critical in sustainable gardening. Collecting rainwater using barrels or designing your garden to maximize rainwater absorption can significantly reduce reliance on municipal water systems. Mulching and choosing drought-resistant plants also help retain soil moisture and reduce water usage. These strategies not only conserve this precious resource but also lower your water bill, making your garden both eco-friendly and economical.

3. DIY Pest Control: Natural Solutions



Chemical pesticides not only harm the environment but can also be costly. Sustainable gardening advocates for natural pest control methods such as companion planting – where certain plant combinations naturally repel pests – or encouraging beneficial insects like ladybugs and bees that prey on harmful pests. These eco-friendly solutions maintain the garden's ecological balance, protecting both your plants and local wildlife.

4. Seed Saving: The Circle of Life



Saving seeds from your garden's plants is a sustainable practice that ensures a continuous supply of your favorite varieties without the need for repeat purchases. This age-old tradition encourages genetic diversity and resilience in plants, contributing to a more robust garden ecosystem. Seed saving is not only economical but also allows you to share and exchange seeds with fellow gardeners, fostering a sense of community and collaboration.

5. Upcycled Containers: Creative Planting Solutions



In sustainable gardening, creativity knows no bounds. Upcycling household items such as old tires, buckets, and even furniture into plant containers adds a unique charm to your garden while reducing waste. This approach not only saves money on planters but also contributes to a reduction in consumer waste, embodying the essence of eco-friendly living.

6. Permaculture Principles: Designing with Nature



Permaculture, a design system based on the patterns and features observed in natural ecosystems, offers a holistic approach to sustainable gardening. By mimicking nature's efficiency, permaculture designs create self-sustaining gardens that require minimal external inputs. This not only conserves resources but also creates a harmonious garden environment that thrives year after year.

7. Green Mulching: A Carpet for Your Plants



Green mulching, using grass clippings or leaf litter as a mulch, provides a dual benefit for your garden. It suppresses weeds, retains soil moisture, and as it decomposes, it adds organic matter back into the soil, enriching it. This practice reduces the need for synthetic weed killers and fertilizers, making your garden more sustainable and cost-effective.

8. Solar Solutions: Harnessing the Sun's Power



Incorporating solar-powered solutions, such as solar water pumps for irrigation or solar lights to illuminate garden paths, reduces reliance on non-renewable energy sources. This not only diminishes your carbon footprint but also lowers energy costs, making solar solutions an excellent addition to the sustainable gardener's toolkit.

9. Planting Natives: The Local Advantage



Native plants are adapted to local climate conditions and soil types, requiring less water, fertilizers, and pesticides. By choosing native plants for your garden, you support local ecosystems and wildlife, contributing to biodiversity conservation. This practice not only fosters a resilient garden but also reduces maintenance costs and efforts.

10. Community Gardening: Sharing the Green



Participating in or starting a community garden fosters a sense of unity and shared purpose in sustainable living. These collaborative spaces not only provide fresh produce and greenery for the community but also serve as hubs for sharing knowledge, resources, and sustainable practices. Community gardening amplifies the impact of individual efforts, making sustainable gardening a collective triumph.

Why Embrace These Sustainable Gardening Hacks



In embracing these eco-friendly and economical gardening hacks, we not only nurture our gardens but also contribute to a healthier planet and society. Sustainable gardening is a testament to the fact that small, thoughtful changes in our daily practices can lead to significant positive impacts on both the environment and our wallets. Let's cultivate our gardens with care, creativity, and sustainability at the forefront for a greener, more bountiful world.

[The Green Gold Rush: Uncovering the Lucrative Secrets of Urban Gardening](#)

[When Should I Transplant Sunflower Seedlings?](#)

[5 Tips For The Lazy Gardener](#)

8 Uses of Baking Soda in Gardening



8 USES OF BAKING SODA

in Gardening

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Baking soda is one of the most amazing, affordable products available to us. Hopefully, you're already using baking soda for cleaning throughout your home. If not, then you're

spending more money than you should on household cleaners. And today let's talk about how baking soda's benefits don't stop there. There are so many uses of baking soda in gardening. Here are eight big ones:

1. Baking Soda for Soil Testing

Everything that you grow needs to grow in suitable soil. The soil's pH level is one of the most critical factors. Therefore, you should do [soil testing](#) before you plant. Baking soda provides an easy, cheap way to do that. Here's what to do:

- Take a tablespoon of soil and place it in a container.
- Add a little bit of distilled water until the soil is mud.
- Add a little bit of baking soda.
- Watch.
- Does the soil fizz? If so, then your soil has an acidic pH level.

Bonus tip: If the soil doesn't fizz with baking soda, then you should do a second test. Take a fresh tablespoon of the soil. Add distilled vinegar to it. If it fizzes now, then your soil has an alkaline pH level. However, if neither the baking soda nor the vinegar cause fizzing, then you have soil with neutral pH.

2. Boost Your Plant Fertilization

[Balcony Garden Web](#) has several great suggestions for using baking soda in gardening. For example, they suggest adding baking soda to fertilize slow-growing, dull-appearing plants. They say that you should mix one teaspoon of baking soda and Epsom salt with 1/2 teaspoon ammonia in one gallon of water. Then add approximately one quart of that solution to each plant you want to fertilize. You should see them grow faster and

brighter in no time.

3. Make Your Tomatoes Taste Better

This is one of my favorite tips from Balcony Garden Web. They explain that if you simply sprinkle a little bit of baking soda around the base of your tomato plants, you'll be able to grow sweeter tomatoes. How is this possible? The soil absorbs the baking soda, lowering the natural acidity levels of the plant itself. Baking soda costs so little and yet it can work so much magic!

4. Get Rid of Garden Pests

It's always so difficult to decide how to handle garden pests like worms and slugs. Some of them don't do that much damage and you might decide to leave them alone. Others, however, can wreak havoc in your garden. If you don't want to lose your plants, then you have to find some way to deal with them.

Baking soda can provide a solution. It's eco-friendly and generally kind to your plants. However, it works as a pesticide. You can put it directly on slugs and gnats to kill them. Alternatively, you can make a solution that you spray on your plants to keep pests away.

5. Uses of Baking Soda on Plant Leaves

Did you know that if you have indoor household plants, you're supposed to clean them? That's right, household dust can settle on them and ruin them. A baking soda solution is a simple way to clean those leaves.

Even outdoors, though, you might find that baking soda helps the leaves of your plants. For example, a baking soda solution

can help prevent fungus growth on plant leaves.

6. Add Baking Soda to Cut Flowers

Do you grow flowers in your backyard garden? If so, then perhaps you sometimes cut them and put them in a vase for yourself or to gift to others. Make those flowers last as long as possible by adding just a little bit of baking soda to the water inside that vase.

7. Deodorize Compost

Hopefully, you have compost for your garden. It's such a waste if you don't. However, the smell of a compost pile might have deterred you. If that's the case, then baking soda can come to the rescue. Just sprinkle a little bit on top of the compost regularly. The smell will go away. You can then reap all the benefits of composting in your garden.

8. Cleaning Around the Garden

The plants are the most important part of your garden. However, they're not the only part. You have gardening tools, statues, chairs, etc. Make sure that you keep all of these things clean for the best garden experience. Baking soda makes a great natural cleaner for all of these.

Read More:

- [100 Alternative Uses for Baking Soda](#)
 - [How to Use Baking Soda for Weed Control](#)
 - [How I Feel About the Hunting of Garden Pests](#)
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Harvesting Rainwater for the Frugal Gardener



HARVESTING RAINWATER
for the Frugal
Gardener

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Gardening requires quite a bit of water. For many gardeners

that means an increase in their water bill during the [hot summer](#) months. Statistics show that lawn and garden watering make up at least [40%](#) of our total household water use. Frugal gardeners, however, can take advantage of rainwater by bringing back an age-old, low-tech system of collecting water from roofs and gutter systems into rain barrels, or cisterns as they have been called. By harvesting rainwater, you can keep your little corner of the world green, decrease stormwater runoff, and cut costs all at the same time.

Harvesting rainwater

One inch of rain on a 1,000 square foot roof will produce 600 gallons of water. Capture just some of that chemical-free rain in a container of any kind and you'll be able to keep your veggie garden thriving and your flowers blooming all season, with no added expense. Your plants will thrive with the natural rainwater compared to water from municipal systems and the chemicals they typically add. Rainwater is a free source of soft water and also excellent for your houseplants.

Most rain barrels now come with the fittings for hooking up a hose, so getting harvesting rainwater is as simple as locating a barrel under a gutter and screwing in your hose. If you have a very small garden plot, or only use small containers, you can opt for a simpler system. Locate a barrel under a downspout and just dip your watering can in when you are planning to water your plants and containers. Each time it rains, you can store water up for the dry days or days you can't water due to summer rationing schedules.

Due to the amount of water coming off a roof, it is important to have a plan for overflow. It's important to have a valve to switch tanks. You can also go low tech and manually move the downspout away from the already full barrel to keep from having a mini Niagara Falls next to your buildings' foundation.

As with anything that holds water, be sure your system has a child-proof, secure lid to prevent accidents. You might also want to screen the opening to your container, not only keeping debris out of the water but discouraging mosquitoes from breeding.

Where to get a water barrel?

Here's a list of a few of the companies that carry water barrels and supplies to help you set up a water storage system. Remember, your system for harvesting rainwater can be as simple or as complex as you have time and money for. Just the savings from setting up one downspout and a barrel will make a difference. What frugal gardener doesn't want to tap into a free resource?

- [Clean Air Gardening](#)
- [NE Design](#)
- [Midwest Internet Sales](#)
- [Spruce Creek Rain Saver](#)
- [Garden Water Saver](#)

Check local regulations

Before purchasing anything, be sure to check with the water department where you live to see if they are sponsoring a [Rain Water Harvesting project](#). Many cities encourage the installation of rain barrels as a method of conservation. They may offer the barrels at a reduced price or give rebates if you purchase your barrel elsewhere. Some towns even offer workshops and supplies to build your own systems.

Rain barrels are one of the simplest, cheapest ways to conserve [water](#), allowing you to treat rainwater as a resource and not a waste product. Harvesting rainwater on your property can help make your garden a more environmentally friendly space.

Installing a Rain Barrel

Rain Water Harvesting