

# What is SUSTAINABLE GARDENING

... and why is it important?

## ✓ **Select the right plant for the space**

1. Select plants that are adapted to our Mediterranean-type climate.
2. Use plants that, when mature, fit the location without significant pruning.
3. Avoid the use of invasive plants.
4. Use proper planting techniques, mounding plants 1-2" above the soil level to avoid drowning them in winter.

## ✓ **When you feed the soil, you feed your plants**

1. Use yard waste and appropriate kitchen waste to make your own compost.
2. Incorporate compost and other organic matter in your soil.
3. Avoid using synthetic, quick-release fertilizers.
4. Use mulch to reduce evaporation and minimize erosion.
5. Place pavers and other path materials through your garden to avoid soil compaction.
6. In the vegetable garden, avoid tilling the soil and use cover crops to increase organic matter.

## ✓ **Make every drop of water used for irrigation count**

1. Use climate-appropriate plants in your garden.
2. Install an efficient irrigation system, using drip wherever possible.
3. Monitor your controller seasonally to avoid overwatering.
4. Hydro-zone by putting plants with similar water needs on the same system or valve.
5. Put at least 3" of mulch in your garden to control weeds and keep water in the soil.
6. Cut back or eliminate the amount of decorative lawn in your garden. Lawns use more water per square foot than agriculture.

## ✓ **Allow water to be absorbed into the soil**

1. Water slowly to avoid run-off.
2. Use permeable hardscape such as pavers, decomposed granite, gravel so rainwater can be absorbed into your soil.
3. Integrate water catchment systems such as swales and rain gardens to help absorb rainwater into the garden.

4. Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides by using Integrated Pest Management practices to avoid leaching these chemicals into our soil and water.
5. Avoid over-fertilization and use only organic fertilizers if needed so that unused chemicals do not end up in our water supply.

✓ **Don't kill the good bugs in your garden**

1. Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices such as biological, cultural, physical and mechanical controls and barriers to manage pests and diseases. Use pesticides and herbicides only as a last resort as they tend to kill the good bugs along with the bad ones.
2. Learn to live with a certain amount of pest damage.
3. Use plants appropriate for our climate to avoid stressing them and making them susceptible to pests and disease.
4. Understand the lifecycles of your pests to determine when they will be most active in your garden.

✓ **Support the birds and the bees**

1. Plant natives to attract wildlife to your garden and provide wildlife corridors.
2. Protect and encourage wildlife by providing water sources, cover and nesting sites.
3. Mass plants to attract beneficial insects to your garden.
4. Limit the amount of lawn in your garden as it does not meet any of the cultural needs of the wildlife we wish to attract.

✓ **Keep your garden clean and green**

1. Use 'green' building materials, locally produced where possible, locally quarried stone and recycled concrete or reuse materials from your own or a friend's garden when redoing your landscape.
2. Create your own compost from plant debris and appropriate kitchen waste.
3. Reduce pruning yard waste by using plants that, when mature, will fit the location.
4. Use hand tools or electric power tools rather than gasoline-powered ones.
5. Grow your own food and share excess with friends, neighbors or your local food bank.
6. Plant deciduous trees on the southwestern side of your home and near your patio to provide shade in summer and reduce air-conditioning use.