

13 Ways to Stop Global Warming, Save Water and Have a Beautiful Natural Garden

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1. Plant a California native garden that utilizes the plants that naturally occur at your site. Native plants thrive where they have evolved and are accustomed to growing in the local climate – abundant rainfall or little rainfall. Once a garden is established, it can survive on annual rainfall. The establishment period is 2 years.
2. Protect your watershed. The less impervious surface you retain on your property, the more rainfall will stay on your property. When you create a garden, try to retain all of your rainfall on your property. If you have concrete on site, renew, reuse or recycle it in creative ways, such as breaking it up and re-laying it for a porous driveway or patio, stacking it for raised beds or planters, staining it and re-laying it as attractive stepping stones or recycling it for future use by others. City recycling centers will accept your broken concrete:
<http://www.sjrecycles.org/business/cddd-certified-facilities.htm>
These facilities will let you pick up recycled concrete as well.
3. Don't use new concrete in garden construction. After the burning of fossil fuels, the manufacture of cement is the number two contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. If you must use concrete, limit its use and request that 'fly ash' be used as an additive, or use porous concrete. Fly ash is a byproduct of burning coal and in addition to being a filler actually improves the concrete. Ask your contractor to add it to the mix. <http://www.flyash.com/flyashenvironment.asp>
Porous concrete is comprised of pea gravel and concrete. Water drains through it. Several local concrete companies now supply porous or 'pervious' concrete, e.g. http://centralconcrete.com/pervious_concrete.html
4. If you must irrigate, do not use spray/sprinkler systems. A sizable amount of the water is lost to evaporation. Use drip, soaker, bubbler, microspray or an underground irrigation system. The one exception is using overhead spray to establish a native bunch grass/wildflower meadow during the establishment period.
5. Lose your Lawn! Up to 60% of household water is used on lawns. And throw away your lawn mower. Two cycle engines are the **most** polluting engines in America. Replace your lawn with a native meadow, native ground cover or a turf substitute. FieldTurf makes a replicated grass product that looks just like grass and has a natural feel, yet is manufactured from recycled plastic and ground up

recycled tennis shoes. It is guaranteed for 15 years.

<http://www.fieldturf.com/product/nikeGrind.cfm>

6. Don't use oil-derived pesticides, insecticides, herbicides or fertilizers. Compost and keep worm bins. Break the chemical dependence cycle. If it has the word "kill" on the package, be very wary of buying it. Your soil is alive and these chemicals can kill your soil (yes, even the fertilizers). Iron-based slug killer and safer 'organic' pesticides on the market including pyrethrins, essential oils and soaps may work more slowly, but you will come out ahead in the end. Reminder: All pesticides should be handled with care. Read labels carefully.
7. Register your garden as a certified national wildlife habitat. (National Wildlife Federation <http://www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat/createhabitat.cfm>). Encourage children to visit your garden. Create places for frogs, birds, butterflies, toads and lizards. Create a small water feature. Leave detritus for animal cover and protection. Be a part of educating the next generation to feel connected to Mother Earth and learning the responsibilities of protecting her.
8. Use solar power to operate fountains, gates, lighting and power in garden sheds and cottages.
9. Grow some of your own food organically. Plant fruit trees and vegetables as landscaping plants. If you can't harvest your food, contribute it to those who need it. Work with local non-profit harvesting agencies such as Village Harvest: <http://www.villageharvest.org/>
10. Use recycled material and products and certified sustainable products in garden construction. Trex, for example, is made primarily with recycled plastic grocery bags, reclaimed pallet wrap and waste wood. Beware: not all composite woods use recycled products. Use 'Forest Council Certified' wood and other recycled materials existing on site. Check <http://www.RecycleWorks.org> for materials you need.
11. Buy from local suppliers. Limit your driving. Order materials online. Have materials delivered to your site.
12. Use tree trimmings for mulch or recycled products like Pro-Chip, which is produced from curbside recycled garden waste. Apply generously to a depth of 3" minimum. It keeps your soil moist, reducing the need for irrigation. Many local tree service companies will give you mulch for free. Pro-Chip is available at local landscape supply companies, like South Bay Materials, as well as from BFI <http://www.interquix.com/organics/decmul.htm>

13. Use weed cloth under mulch. This will allow the native plants to become established by repressing invasive weeds that can sneak through mulch. 4 hours of weeding in the sun will have you wishing you had used weed cloth. Install it from the start and smile every time you walk by your weed-free garden beds.