

## The benefits of gardens to you and the environment

Gardening has been part of the human experience for thousands of years. From our earliest gardening experiences of growing food to current urban reforestation projects, the need to be surrounded by greenery and beauty is part of human nature. Gardening adds quality to our lives.

Today over 85 million households across America enjoy some form of gardening. It is the No. 1 leisure time activity in America.

Here are some of the benefits of gardening:

**Environmental quality enhancement:** Plants play a key role in urban areas to improve the quality of the environment. Plants absorb greenhouse gases through photosynthesis, reduce glare from buildings and paved surfaces, absorb unwanted noise and moderate the climate by blocking wind and providing shade.

**Mind, body and spirit:** Numerous health studies have shown the benefits of gardening. The physical activity of gardening contributes to a healthy, active lifestyle and can provide as much exercise as a workout at the gym. Gardens also improve mental health by lowering stress and anxiety and by providing a relaxation response. Horticultural therapy programs have shown people of any age can enjoy these benefits.

**Reduced crime:** Recent university studies have shown the greener the surroundings, the fewer crimes occur against people and property. Compared with apartment buildings that had little or no vegetation, buildings with high levels of greenery had 52 percent fewer total crimes. In urban neighborhoods, relationships between neighbors were made stronger simply through the presence of more trees and grass in common spaces.

**Food for you and wildlife:** Gardening has many tangible rewards, such as producing fresh vegetables, fruit and herbs for homemade meals and area restaurants. It also provides culinary delights and a habitat for songbirds, butterflies and other wildlife.

*This guide is designed to help homeowners enjoy green healthy gardens, while also being good stewards of the environment.*

## Dedicated to a beautiful world



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The Scotts Company is a proud sponsor of Keep America Beautiful® and its Great American Cleanup.™ Each spring, Keep America Beautiful – the nation's largest volunteer-based community improvement and education organization – engages millions of volunteers in more than 15,000 communities in programs in all 50 states that beautify and improve community environments.

As part of our commitment, Scotts is sponsoring "community showcase gardens" in several cities. We're also providing lawn care and gardening tips to communities throughout America. We want to help you enjoy the benefits of beautiful lawns and gardens, while helping you to do your part to enhance our environment and keep America beautiful.

As the world's largest supplier of lawn care and gardening products, Scotts is equally committed to developing products and packaging that are beneficial to the environment and that consumers can use with confidence. Join Scotts and Keep America Beautiful in our dedication to a beautiful world. By following these tips, you can be an environmental steward in your own yard and garden.

## Beautiful Gardens and a healthy environment



Homeowner's tips for maintaining gardens and enjoying the environment



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# 10 tips for creating a beautiful garden and a healthy environment

There are many benefits associated with gardening, whether it's a flower garden, vegetable garden or the landscaping around your home. Getting great results from gardening is easier than many people realize. You can also be a good steward of the environment with proper gardening practices. Homeowners can have healthy and beautiful gardens by following these tips.

**1 Always read the label.** It's important to use garden products correctly by following the label instructions. Over-application will not improve product performance and can potentially harm your plants and the environment. Never dump leftover product into the storm sewer or down the drain. Following the directions is the safest practice for you, your children, pets and the environment.

**2 Select the right plant.** Choose easy-to-grow plants that are well-adapted or native to your region. Be aware of plant needs for light (sun vs. shade), soil conditions (moist vs. dry or acid vs. alkaline), and temperature (cool vs. warm). Avoid plants with known pest problems. Enhance your garden by choosing plants with interesting flowers, foliage and fruits.

**3 Get the soil ready.** Great garden soils are built over time from the addition of organic matter to improve the soil so that more water and nutrients can get to the roots. Start every spring by adding compost or garden soil to beds prior to planting. During the growing year, recycle yard wastes through composting.

**4 Planting in the ground.** Plant annual flowers and vegetables once the danger of frost is past in the spring. Put plants in the ground at the same soil height as they were grown in the nursery. Trees and shrubs can be planted also in the fall.



**5 Use our natural water resources wisely.**

It is important to use our water resources carefully. Use rainfall as the principal water source for your garden. Watch for signs of lack of water, such as dry soil or slight wilting, before watering. Only water during the cool times of the day.

**6 Feed your garden regularly.**

Plants must receive nutrients to survive. In addition to light and water, they need a regular diet of minerals and other elements. By applying plant food on a regular basis, the plants can continue to grow and produce foliage, flowers and fruit.

**7 Protect the soil with mulch.**

Using mulch around trees and in gardens is a key practice of successful gardeners. Mulch conserves soil moisture, prevents weeds and moderates soil temperatures. There is a wide variety of mulch materials available to enhance any planting.

**8 Control garden pests.**

Insects, diseases and weeds can harm the beauty of your garden. Identify the pest problem first and then decide if the problem is bad enough to need a cure. For small, localized problems, a spot treatment with a ready-to-use product provides quick, easy and effective control. This approach balances effective pest control with protecting the environment.

**9 Container gardening.**

Growing plants in containers provides versatile, portable gardens around homes and apartments. Most plants grow well in containers, especially annual flowers and foliage. Choose plants that best fit the growing conditions where the pots will be placed and use a potting soil. Care for these portable gardens with mulch, fertilizer and water.

**10 Attract wildlife to your garden.**

Many plants attract birds, butterflies and bees with their flowers, fruits and berries. Backyard wildlife habitats can also be enhanced with feeders, birdhouses, water gardens and other garden structures.

