

10 Carbon-Capturing Practices

Whether you're an experienced horticulturalist or novice gardener, these simple practices can be integrated into any plot. Here's what you can do to transform your garden into a Climate Victory Garden. While we understand that not all of these practices can be implemented everywhere by everyone, we encourage you to do your best and commit to incorporating as many into your garden as possible. And, over time, we hope that you will be able to adopt them all.



1

Grow Edible Plants

That's right, grow food, not just grass and ornamentals. This decreases your grocery bills, encourages seasonal eating, and helps you and your family establish a closer relationship with your food.

Actions: plant your favorite foods; share with your neighbors.



2

Keep Soils Covered

Protecting soils is the first step to improving their health. Physically covering exposed ground in your garden decreases water needs, curbs erosion, maintains topsoil, and protects soil microbes.

Actions: apply mulch; leave plant residues; plant cover crops; strategically allow weeds.



3

Compost

Organic materials combined with healthy microbes create a strong fertilizer. This reduces waste going to methane-releasing landfills (greenhouse gas), increases your soil quality, and improves nutrition levels in the foods you grow.

Actions: compost kitchen and yard wastes; apply compost as fertilizer; share with your neighbors.



4

Encourage Biodiversity, Above and Below Ground

Diverse plants support diverse soil communities and make for beautiful gardens. Biodiversity helps your garden grow nutritious food, create habitat and balanced ecosystems, and keeps pests in check.

Actions: grow many different types of plants; feed soil life with compost; plant pollinator habitats.



5

Plant Perennials

These crops reduce soil disturbance and save you time, because they do not need to be replanted each year. Perennials protect your garden from the elements, control weeds, and provide habitat.

Actions: plant trees; choose perennial grasses, shrubs, herbs, and food crops.

Climate Benefits KEY



Pulls carbon from the air, where it contributes to climate change as the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO₂)



Increases the ability of soil to keep carbon underground that would otherwise be released in the air to form CO₂

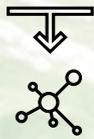


Reduces greenhouse gas emissions from various parts of the food system—may include emissions from soils, landfills, transportation, and input production

Climate Victory Gardens sequester carbon, but they also benefit the climate by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from food transportation, landfills, and the production of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

10 Carbon-Capturing Practices *continued*

6



Ditch the Chemicals

Synthetic chemicals like herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers kill beneficial organisms in the soil. Gardening chemical-free reduces your input costs, ensures safety for you and your family, and decreases pollution—from factory production to run off.

Actions: fertilize with compost; plant companion crops; use integrated pest management.

7



Integrate Crops and Animals

Plants and animals evolved to coexist. Having animals in your garden or yard—like chickens, goats, or pigs—helps decrease pests and allows for natural fertilization. You may even get some eggs or milk out of the deal! If you can't have animals, consider adding manure to your compost. Encourage pollinators and birds to enjoy your garden.

Actions: allow chickens, goats, and other small animals to forage for insects and eliminate weeds; grow pollinator- and bird-friendly gardens.

8



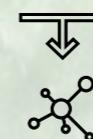
Use People Power, Not Mechanization

Ditch the machines and use your hands! It's hard work, but this helps reduce your dependency on fuel, decreases emissions, and lessens your costs. It eliminates the possibility of your soil being contaminated by spilled oil. And, you can build human relationships by asking for help from others.

Actions: hand-pull weeds; build beds with shovels; rake instead of using blowers; choose push mowers over gas powered; don't till your soil; bike or walk to your garden if it's not on your property.

One teaspoon of healthy soil contains more microorganisms than there are people on the planet!

9



Rotate Plants and Crops

It's important to move crops around in your garden and plant new varieties each season. This confuses pests, ensures soil nutrients stay balanced, and reduces your need for chemical inputs.

Actions: choose different crops and new locations each season; consider nitrogen fixing plants, keep records to help you remember where to plant next year.

10



Get to Know Your Garden

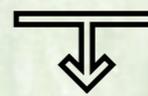
This goes beyond simply familiarizing yourself. Studying your garden helps you identify planting zones and determine how water, inputs, and other management can be applied most efficiently.

Actions: test soil for nutrients and toxins; monitor moisture; remove pests and diseased plants quickly; keep records to ensure you're rotating plants.

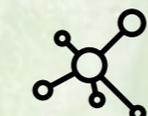
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