

WHY GO ORGANIC?

Tips to keeping your beautiful garden free of pesticides and chemicals!

Organic gardening starts with the nourishment of the soil, which leads to the nourishment of the plant and ultimately, the planet. Organic methods encourage biodiversity, allowing a wide variety of species to live in your garden, which is especially important in your soil.

The chemicals you might be tempted to use in your garden can leach into the groundwater, destroying bodies of water, killing wildlife and making its way into our bodies. Chemical fertilizers also gradually deplete the soil of its minerals and nutrients, turning the living soil into unproductive dirt. Growing organically means taking care of the soil, which will take care of the plants, and finally, the local environment.

Eating organically has its benefits too organically-grown food has more minerals and nutrients than food grown with synthetic pesticides. There's a good reason why many chefs use organic foods in their recipes – they taste better.

Organic gardening also gives you peace of mind! Without the use of herbicides, pesticides and insecticides you can feel better about feeding your family safe produce straight from your garden!



ORGANIC FERTILIZERS

Weed Tea

Fill a rain barrel with rain water or Non-chlorinated water and add chopped up weeds and green material. Let the mixture stand in the sun for several days. Drain the liquid off the top and dilute it with 5 parts water. Spray your weed fertilizer on plants or use it as a soil drench.

Compost/Comfrey/Nettle/Manure Tea

Fill an old pillowcase or burlap bag with your chosen material, and sink it into a large bucket or barrel of water. The longer you steep, the stronger it will be. The final 'brew' can be used as a light liquid feed. Diluted concentrate can be sprayed directly on leaves to increase nutrient absorption.

Seedling Starter Solution

Mix 1/2 cup fish emulsion with 1/2 seaweed extract in a container. Store in a sealed container in a cool, dark place. To use, add 3 Tbsp. of starter solution to 4 liters of water. Use as a soil drench or as a spray for leaf feeding.



REAPS
RECYCLING & ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION PLANNING SOCIETY

Location: 1950 Gorse St. Prince George

Mailing Address: PO Box 444,
Prince George, B.C. V2L 4S6

Phone: 250.561.7327

Fax: 250.561.7324

Website: reaps.org

Email: recycling@reaps.org

Tips for

ORGANIC GARDENING



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COMPANION PLANTING

By planting things together that benefit each other, you can minimize pests and maximize plant growth!

- **Beans (bush):** Potatoes, cucumbers, corn, strawberries, celery
- **Beans (pole):** Corn, summer savory, sunflower
- **Beets:** Onions, Kohlrabi
- **Cabbage Family (cabbage, kale, cauliflower, broccoli):** Aromatic plants, potatoes, celery, dill, hyssop, sage, chamomile, peppermint, rosemary, beets, onions
- **Carrots:** Peas, leaf lettuce, chives, onions, leeks, rosemary, sage, tomatoes
- **Celery:** Leeks, tomatoes, bush beans, cauliflower, cabbage
- **Chives:** Carrots, tomatoes
- **Corn:** Potatoes, peas, beans, cucumbers, pumpkins, squash
- **Cucumbers:** Beans, corn, peas, radishes, sunflowers, lettuce
- **Eggplant:** Beans, potatoes, spinach
- **Leeks:** Onions, celery, carrots
- **Lettuce:** Carrots, radishes, strawberries, cucumbers, onions
- **Onions (garlic):** Beets, strawberries, tomatoes, lettuce, leeks, summer savory, chamomile (sparsely), pepper
- **Peas:** Carrots, turnips, radishes, cucumbers, corn, beans, most vegetables and herbs
- **Potatoes:** Beans, corn, cabbage, horseradish (should be planted at the corners of the patch), marigolds, eggplant
- **Radishes:** Peas, nasturtiums, lettuce, melons, cucumbers
- **Spinach:** Strawberries, eggplant
- **Squash:** Nasturtiums, corn
- **Strawberries:** Bush beans, spinach, borage, lettuce, onions
- **Tomatoes:** Chives, onions, parsley, carrots, asparagus, marigolds, nasturtiums

CHOOSING YOUR PLANTS

The plants you choose to plant in your garden will determine the amount of blood, sweat and tears you'll expend over the next growing season.

For instance, some plants encourage beneficial insects (bees, ladybugs, etc.) to spend time in your garden. A few beneficial insect-attracting perennials are comfrey, crocus, fennel, feverfew, garlic chives, goldenrod, lavender, mint, strawberries, teasel, thrift, and yarrow.

You should also concentrate on buying perennials, as they cost less money and time (you do not have to replace them every year), they are more resistant to pests and changes in temperature/moisture than annuals. Try to buy native ones while you're at it!

Native plants have a number of benefits, mainly they will do better in Prince George (zone 3); they are more resistant to pests, hardier, essentially they require less general maintenance. When looking for plants that are native ensure that they are truly native and not invasive.

For more information on local invasive plants contact The Northwest Invasive Plant Council at 1-866-449-3337 or www.nwipc.org

Tip! Note what sun/moisture/soil conditions plants prefer, and plant in an as ideal location as possible for a healthier plant.



MINIMIZING PESTS

It is natural for insects to be eating plants. They need to be controlled only when they are so abundant that they interfere with the plants ability to produce food. Rather than trying to destroy a species after it becomes a problem, try preventative maintenance.

Keep the Garden Clean

Insects hide in weeds and garden debris. Keep your garden weeded and use a clean mulch.

Use Inter-planting

Insects feed on plants belonging to a certain family and usually reject others. By avoiding planting plants of the same species together, you can keep insect populations to minimum.

Insect Barriers

Insects can be discouraged from attacking plants by setting up physical barriers between them and the plants. A good example is a cardboard collar around a transplant to prevent cutworm damage.

Plant Varieties

Some varieties of plants are more resistant to insects than others. Try to use native plants, as they are often more capable of resisting local insects.

Crop Rotation

Many insects winter in, on or around their host plants. To avoid insect re-infestations each year, do not plant in the same place each season. It's also much better for the soil for plants to change locations annually, as each species depletes and creates different nutrients.

