



Gardeners Can Play an Important Role in Reducing Global Warming

Trade-in the SUV, use florescent light bulbs, turn down your thermostat. These are just some of the things we're being told we can do to reduce our impact on global warming. But according to a new report from the National Wildlife Federation, "*A Gardeners Guide to Global Warming*," there are also many things you can do in the garden that will help combat this serious and potentially devastating environmental problem.

While many of these conservation practices aren't new to gardeners, they are made ever more important now given the threat of global warming.

REDUCE THE THREAT OF INVASIVE SPECIES AND INCORPORATE A DIVERSITY OF NATIVE PLANTS INTO YOUR LANDSCAPE. Global warming will contribute to a dramatic expansion of invasive, non-native plants and animals, which are able to take advantage of weakened ecosystems and out-compete native species. Higher average temperatures and changes in precipitation patterns will enable some of the most problematic species, including kudzu, garlic mustard, purple loosestrife and Japanese honeysuckle, to move into new areas.



Gardeners can play an important role in minimizing the threat of invasive species expansion by removing invasive plants from the garden and choosing an array of native alternatives.

In addition, global warming will contribute to more severe infestations and habitat damage from both native and exotic insect pests, including black vine weevil, gypsy moth, bagworm and mountain pine beetle.

Contact your local/state native plant society to find out what plants are native to your area or check out NWF's web site for a listing at www.nwf.org/backyard/food

LIMIT WATER CONSUMPTION.

In many parts of the country, more severe heat waves, droughts and declining snowpack due to global warming will cause a considerable reduction in available water resources. There are a number of ways to reduce water consumption in your garden including mulching, installing rain barrels, watering only in the morning and evening to avoid mid-day evaporation and using drip irrigation.

COMPOST KITCHEN AND GARDEN WASTE. Composting kitchen and garden waste can significantly reduce your

contribution to global warming pollution, especially methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas. It also provides an excellent source of nutrients for your garden, which reduces the need for chemical fertilizers that pollute water supplies and take a considerable amount of energy to produce.

ESTABLISH A "GREEN ROOF" AND PLANT TREES AROUND YOUR HOUSE. Planting rooftop gardens and planting trees near your home can significantly shield your home from the elements, reducing energy use for air conditioning in the summer and heating in the winter. One study showed that shade trees can reduce energy use for air conditioning by up to seventy percent. Trees also absorb and store carbon dioxide (CO²), which is the gas primarily responsible for global warming. Over an average life-span for a tree, it can remove a ton of CO² from the atmosphere.

DEVELOP A RAIN GARDEN.

Gardeners can reduce water pollution associated with heavy downpours by developing rain gardens, which capture stormwater runoff and help prevent it from entering local lakes, streams and coastal waters.

REDUCE THE USE OF GASOLINE-POWERED YARD TOOLS. Avoid using gasoline-powered tools such as lawn mowers, weed eaters and leaf blowers. Instead, use electric-powered or, better yet, human-powered tools such as push mowers, hand clippers



and rakes. If this seems daunting, you might consider replacing some of your lawn with low maintenance shrubs, bushes or a native wildflower patch.

IMPROVE YOUR ENERGY

EFFICIENCY. Use more energy-efficient products. Replace regular outdoor light bulbs with compact fluorescents, install outdoor automatic light timers and purchase solar-powered garden products. You can increase the availability of energy efficient garden products as well as native plants by encouraging local home and garden retailers to carry these items.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED

OFFICIALS. Gardeners can voice their concerns about global warming to their local, state and federal government representatives urging them to implement strong action plans to combat global warming. These actions can include: placing mandatory limits on global warming pollution, raising fuel economy standards for cars and SUVs, and investing in clean and efficient energy technologies.

Solutions to global warming are readily at hand and gardeners can make a major contribution to implementing those solutions so that the beauty and utility of our gardens will endure for future generations.

The complete *Gardeners Guide to Global Warming* can be found at www.nwf.org/gardenersguide