

For the past two years, SOCRRA (Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority), Oakland County MSU Extension, Wayne County MSU Extension and the Metropolitan Detroit Landscape Association have shared knowledge and experiences related to healthy garden practices and public education.

The healthy garden principles and practices presented in this brochure help gardeners reduce yard waste and protect water quality.

When soil and plants are healthy, plants naturally resist disease and pests –allowing gardeners to reduce their use of pesticides and quick-release fertilizers. Healthy garden practices usually save gardeners time and effort of the long-run.

Gardeners learn from the experience of others –as well as from their own observations, classes, and printed materials. Please share your knowledge and experience with friends, neighbors and children. Environmental stewardship to promote healthy landscapes is an important contribution to the future of our communities.

The Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project is funded, in part, by the United States Environment Protection Agency grant #X995743-02.

Help prevent pollution in your neighborhood.

Join the Rouge Friendly Neighborhood Program!

The Rouge Friendly Neighborhood Program involves individuals and neighborhoods in protecting the Rouge River Watershed. By participating in this program, you and your neighbors will receive educational materials about the Rouge River and how small daily changes can protect the river.

You will also have the opportunity to participate in programs such as storm drain stenciling and Rouge RiverWatch, which is where your neighborhood would adopt a section of the river.

Interested? If you would like to learn more about this program, please contact Friends of the Rouge at (313) 961-4050.

Please join us in a watershed-wide campaign to restore and protect the Rouge River!

**Friends
of
the ROUGE**



Brochure adapted from SOCRRA's (Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority) healthy garden brochure, which was partially funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

SOCRRA is located at 3910 W. Webster, Royal Oak, MI 48073; (248) 288-5150

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Healthy Garden Principles & Practices

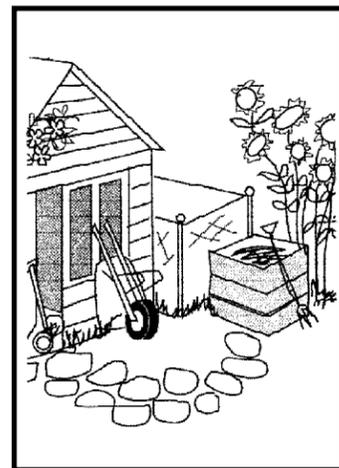


Recommended by Wayne County Department of Environment, SOCRRA, Oakland County MSU Extension, Wayne County MSU Extension, and the Metropolitan Detroit Landscape Association

PRINCIPLE #1

BUILD FERTILE SOILS WITH ORGANIC MATTER

- Use compost to amend and enrich your soil. Compost improves soil structure, retains water, aerates soil, slowly releases nutrients to the soil system, supports beneficial microorganisms and earthworms, and suppresses some soilborne diseases.
- Use natural mulches such as shredded leaves, grass clippings, finely-shredded bark, cocoa shells, and pine needles. These types of mulches reduce weeds, moderate soil temperatures, help retain moisture in the soil, and help renew soils as the mulches slowly release their nutrients.



PRINCIPLE #2

SELECT PLANTS SUITED FOR THE SITE AND CLIMATE CONDITIONS — EXPAND YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF “RIGHT PLANT IN THE RIGHT PLACE”

- Learn about plants and their natural environments. Select plants which are specifically suited to the site location. Think about factors such as the following: sun or shade conditions; soil texture (clay, loam, or sand); exposure of site to wind and rain; topography and drainage.
- Consider landscaping with pest-resistant hardy or native plants which often require less water, fertilizer, and pesticides.



PRINCIPLE #3

DIVERSIFY YOUR GARDEN TO ENCOURAGE BENEFICIAL INSECTS AND PEST RESISTANCE

- Select plants which are pest and disease-resistant. Mix and diversify plantings to discourage pest infestations and to attract beneficial insects. If one type of plant doesn't survive, it can be removed without destroying the entire garden.
- Periodically move or rotate plants (including annual flowers, perennial flowers and vegetables) to encourage a diversity of soil microorganisms and to keep soil nutrients balanced.



PRINCIPLE #4

PROVIDE NUTRIENTS AND WATER TO SUSTAIN HEALTHY PLANTS

- Nutrients are gradually used up (or lost) from the soil system and need to be periodically replaced. Lack of adequate water may also stress plants.
- Don't guess...soil test! Complete soil nutrient tests every 2 - 3 years and use the results when selecting fertilizers and soil amendments. Be sure to ask for an "organic matter" test as well as the test for pH and nutrients.
- Be careful not to over-apply fertilizers, which can run off to nearby lakes, streams, and groundwater. Over-application of fertilizers can burn and damage plants or create undesirable plant growth. Slow-release fertilizers are recommended. They gradually release nutrients over the growing season, save time, and help protect water quality.

PRINCIPLE #5

RECYCLE YARD CLIPPINGS ON-SITE

- Create and maintain a compost pile with shredded leaves (50%), grass and/or green yard clippings (25%) and soil or compost (25%). Keep the pile moist and periodically mix (turn over) the pile.
- Use leaves and grass clippings as natural mulch to reduce weeds, retain moisture, and reduce soil erosion.
- Dig shredded leaves and/or grass clippings into garden soil in the fall. The clippings will gradually decompose and contribute organic matter to the soil before spring planting time.



PRINCIPLE #6

MINIMIZE THE USE OF INSECTICIDES, HERBICIDES, AND OTHER PESTICIDES. PRACTICE INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM)

- Select pest-resistant plant varieties and use good gardening practices to maintain healthy plants.
- Establish a threshold of tolerance for pests and plant damage. Monitor your garden to identify potential problems. Always identify the insect, weed, or disease causing the problem before initiating treatment.
- If pest levels exceed the critical threshold, consider all options which effectively address the problem. Then select the least-toxic control option. For information on the health and environmental effects of commonly available pesticides, consult EXTTOXNET — a reference book available at public libraries and some garden centers and hardware stores in SOCRRA communities.

