

## Eco-Smart Gardening Offers Clever Solutions

Eco-smart gardening makes a lot of sense. It can help reduce carbon dioxide levels, promote environmental sustainability, and even save you a little money. Here are a few quick tips to get you started:



**De-fuel.** According to Statistics Canada, using a standard gas mower for one hour causes the same amount of pollution as driving a new car 550 kms. For a greener alternative, try using push reel or electric mowers and cordless trimmers. These non-gasoline powered solutions help eliminate harmful emissions, are quieter, and can save you anywhere between \$55-550 in annual fuel costs.\*

**Cut high.** Set your lawn mower so it cuts high (approximately 7-8 cm from the ground) to encourage the growth of deep roots.

Taller blades and deeper roots make grass more naturally resistant to insects, help control crabgrass, and conserve moisture better by shading the soil.

**Grow up, not out.** For condo dwellers and those who lack landscape space, growing vertical plants or herbs on the side of your building is a great alternative to a traditional garden. Vertical plants require minimal care, help cut down on noise, and will improve air quality around your living space.

**Waste not, want not.** 50 per cent of water used for gardening in Canada is wasted as a result of overwatering.\*\* To prevent water waste, use the soaker instead of the mist setting on your hose. This delivers water directly to the base of the plant and reduces water loss due to evaporation. If using a sprinkler, keep the water low to the grass and make sure it doesn't fall on nearby sidewalks or driveways.

**Let it rain.** Rainwater, not chemically-treated tap water, is the best source of nutrients for growing your plants and collecting it is always a good idea. Creating your own rainwater collection system can be as easy as setting up jars, bowls, or barrels to collect and store water for drier periods. You can also take advantage of rainwater by positioning downspouts so that water flows directly onto planted beds, lawn areas, or directly into your rainwater collection system. Either way, you can watch your plants grow up, and your water and utility bills go down.

\* Analysis based on data from Environment Canada. \*\* Natural Resources Canada

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