

6 EASY WAYS!

To Embrace Organic Gardening

**Alana Salas-Yoshii, Public Affairs Intern
Municipal Water District of Orange County**

Did you know? There are easy ways to implement organic gardening, reduce pollution runoff, AND grow a luscious, water-smart garden simultaneously! Organic gardening is a helpful practice in the quest for cleaner waterways. With increasing concerns about pollution runoff and its adverse effects on water quality, reducing the use of chemicals can help organisms thrive! Unlike conventional methods that rely on synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, organic gardening encourages a harmonious coexistence with nature, supporting healthy homes for beneficial insects, microorganisms, and indigenous flora.

One of the key advantages of organic gardening is its ability to limit damaging runoff. The absence of chemicals means that runoff from your organic garden is less likely to carry harmful pollutants into the waterways people, animals, and plants depend on. As we strive to protect our waterways, embracing organic gardening is a responsible commitment to conserving our most precious natural resource.

Here are a few easy ways to incorporate organic gardening into your home:



1

MOVE TO MULCH.

Organic mulch, such as worm compost, wood chips, or straw, assists in suppressing pesky weeds AND insulating soil. Mulch also helps soil retain water and nutrients, so less water is needed to keep plants healthy!

2

PREVENT PEST PROBLEMS.

There are a variety of ways to deter pests without the use of harsh chemicals that risk polluting our waterways! Utilize physical barriers such as screens, walls, and fences to keep unwanted critters away from your plants.

3

READY FOR ROGUING.

Roguing – or the removal of unhealthy or unwanted plants by hand – can have major benefits for your garden! Getting rid of sick or unwelcomed plants lessens the likelihood of attracting destructive insects, fungi, and bacteria to your yard, all while reducing your garden's water demands. This way, your plants do not have to compete for water and have a better chance of survival!

4

LET LADYBUGS LOOSE.

Introducing biological methods like predatory insects and pollinators helps diminish the population of plant-feeding insects and reduces the use of synthetic pesticides that risk polluting our water supply. Consider introducing ladybugs, lacewings, butterflies, bees, hoverflies, or parasitic wasps to help keep your garden luscious and pesticide-free.

5

GET HELP FROM HERBS.

Herbs are a great way to add fresh flavor to meals, but did you know they also naturally repel insects? Indoors, use basil to keep flies at bay. Outdoors utilize sage and rosemary, both drought-tolerant plants, to keep bothersome mosquitoes away!

6

KEEP CALIFORNIA NATIVES.

California native plants offer much more than just beautiful blooms and lush greenery. They are also climate resistant and provide a habitat for pollinators and other insects. Additionally, hearty natives reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers and excessive watering.