

# Gardeners

Working together, Oregonians have the opportunity to help restore clean water and wild salmon for the benefit of us all and for future generations. The suggestions in this guide are practical changes we can consider making in our daily land management, work and lives to support this statewide restoration effort. These suggestions do not substitute for any local, state or federal legal regulations.

For more information on these and other ways we can modify our activities to help restore clean water and salmon, please call your local Soil and Water Conservation District Office.

This guide for gardeners is part of a series of lists targeting a wide variety of groups in Oregon. For information on other guides in this series, please contact the Governor's Natural Resources Office at (503) 378-3589.



**THE OREGON PLAN**  
*for salmon & watersheds*

# Ten ways gardeners can help restore clean water and salmon

## **native plant placement**

- Seek landscaping advice to help prevent erosion and reduce water and chemical needs when planting or redesigning a garden. Strategic placement of native plants can reduce both the maintenance required and the impact of your garden on the environment.

## **fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides**

- Avoid overuse of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. If you are using commercial products, follow label instructions completely. When used in excess, these nutrients and chemicals are more likely to runoff into streams or sewers where they significantly impact watersheds. Fertilizers can stimulate growth, causing harmful blooms of aquatic algae and plants, while herbicides and pesticides can poison both plant and animal life.

## **weed management**

- Pull weeds when they first appear to keep them from spreading. By preventing weeds before they become established, the need for herbicides can be significantly reduced. If herbicides are used, practice spot-spraying to target specific plants, instead of broad chemical application.

## **soil pH**

- Monitor the pH of your soil with a simple test kit. Maintaining an ideal pH reduces the need to fertilize by improving the efficiency of your plants to absorb nutrients.

## **lawn watering**

- Water lawns about one inch, once per week to avoid over-watering which can wash essential nutrients from the soil, cause shallow root growth and increase runoff of sediment and pollutants to waterways or storm drains. Place a tuna can on the lawn when watering to

measure one inch of water. For most efficient water use, water lawns in the early morning or late evening to avoid excessive evaporation. A handy way to measure one inch of watering

## **mulch**

- Mulch between garden rows and around trees and shrubs. Mulch can reduce watering needs by helping the soil retain water and discouraging weeds that can compete for moisture.

## **automatic or drip watering systems**

- Use automatic or drip watering systems or use sprinkler heads that most efficiently meet your watering needs. By using tools to help conserve water, more water can be reserved instream to improve water quality and support fish and other aquatic life.

## **mowing**

- Select plants and grasses that require less mowing and choose alternatives to gas mowers. Reducing the need for gas-powered mowers, which contribute significantly to air pollution problems, can help improve air quality that in turn improves watershed health.

## **grass length**

- Keep grass one to three inches long. Grass this length shades the roots, requires less water and mowing, and allows the root system to become deeper and more efficient in water storage.

## **organic formulas**

- Consider trying an organic, homemade formula for fertilizing and pest control needs. Organic recipes can work as well as chemicals, at less cost to you and to the environment.