

HOW **SUSTAINABLE** IS YOUR GARDEN?

Sustainable Gardening is all about gardening in a way that minimises the impact our gardening practices have on the natural environment.

This audit has been designed to enable you to conduct an assessment of the sustainability of your garden. Simply tick a box if it is something you are doing in your garden and add up your total at the end. You can continue making your garden more sustainable by aiming for more ticks in 6 and 12 months time.

If you require more information about an issue, refer to one of the Sustainable Gardening



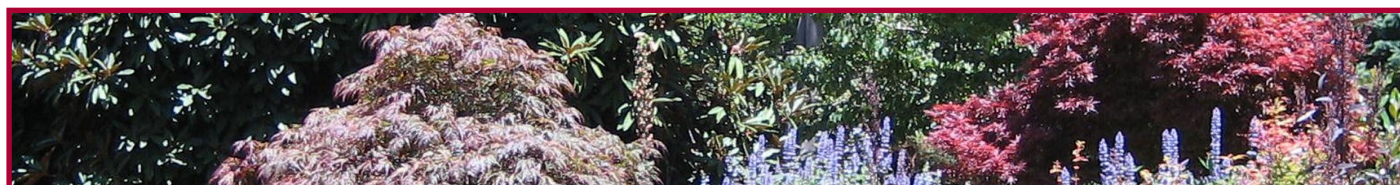
Give yourself a tick if you do any of the following:

Garden Design — do you?

- Have a plan of sun/shade, slope and soil variation of your property
- Have a rough planting plan that groups plants according to their water, sun and soil needs
- Have a low water use design
- Think about the amount of waste (e.g. lawn clippings and prunings) generated by your garden and identify ways for managing it on site (composting or mulching)
- Have less than 50% of your garden area taken up by lawn
- Have permeable surfaces e.g. stepping stones or gravel, rather than concrete or continuous tiling, to allow more water to soak into the ground
- Have a design that creates flow, interest and appeal
- Have a design appropriate for your needs, e.g. space to socialise, washing line, space for pets and play

Design Score

/8



Soil and Fertility — do you?

- Regularly add organic matter (e.g. compost, manure) to your soil
- Retain and improve soil structure by not digging the soil or walking on garden beds as little as possible
- Use organic fertilisers (compost, manure, seaweed and fish emulsions)
- Use your compost as a fertiliser under mulch, mixed with potting mix in containers, on top of seed beds in the vegetable garden or stewed in water to make a liquid feed
- Check mulch levels and replace every year to bring back to a minimum of 2.5 cm and maximum of 7.5 cm
- Have at least one worm in a spadeful of soil wherever you dig in the garden
- Know which are the best types of mulch for different types of plants
- Know at least five good things mulch does to reduce maintenance

Soil and Fertility Score

/8

Plant Selection — do you?

- Know the difference between native, indigenous and exotic plants through talking to your local nursery or using reference material
- Choose plants suitable to specific local conditions of soil, temperature and rainfall
- Know which plants are environmental weeds and do not have them in your garden
- Have at least one shade tree of suitable size for your garden
- Have some prickly or dense plants to provide shelter for birds
- Have grouped your plants according to their water, sun and nutrient needs
- Grow edibles e.g. fruit trees, vegetables and herbs

Plant Selection Score

/7

Waste Management — do you?

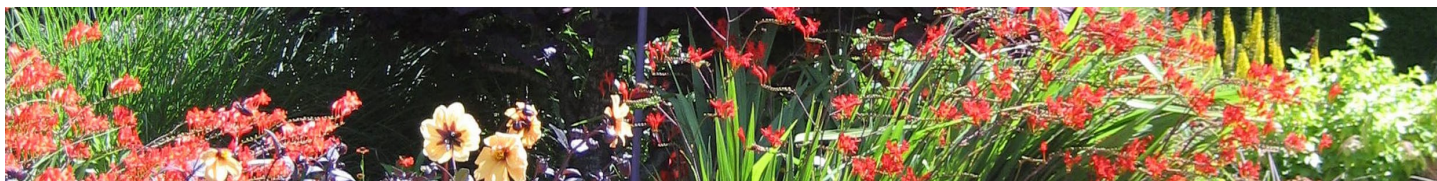
- Limit fertiliser use on your plants to avoid excess washing into waterways
- Put as little as possible in your household garbage bin and green waste bin
- Make your own compost
- Know 10 things you can put in compost and three things you shouldn't put in compost
- Use a worm farm
- Regularly turn your compost to aerate it
- Use recycled materials for landscaping and plant containers

Waste Management Score /7

Water — do you?

- Avoid using mains water on your lawn if you have one
- Mulch all of your garden beds and pots
- Cut your lawn longer (8–10 cm) over summer, or preferably, don't have a lawn at all
- Use tank water or grey water from laundry and bathroom (using EPA approved guidelines)
- Water around the plant root zone with long, infrequent watering in the cool of the day
- Use a soaker hose or dripper system beneath mulch instead of sprays
- Have a tap timer, rain sensor or soil moisture sensor

Water Score /7



Biodiversity and Habitat — do you?

- Have some of your garden planted with native or indigenous plants, for example, 30%. Your local government website will probably have a list.
- Select plants that provide food for butterflies, birds, bees and other insects
- Provide a reliable source of water for wildlife
- Regularly observe native birds, reptiles, insects and animals in your garden
- Have nest boxes or insectary to provide shelter for birds, insects, bats etc
- Either not have a cat or dog or, if you do, keep it indoors as much as possible, especially at night

Biodiversity Score /6

Pest and Disease Management — do you?

- Use integrated pest management
- Use companion planting
- Check your garden regularly for pest outbreaks
- Know exactly what pest or disease you are trying to control
- Use chemicals that are friendly to the environment and safe for humans (See SGA's Green Up Product Guide <http://www.sgaonline.org.au/green-product-guide/>)
- Use natural alternatives (e.g. garlic sprays) or if you do use chemical sprays, target only the affected plant(s)
- Avoid using chemicals before it rains or on windy days

Pest & Disease Score /7

Sustainable Gardening Score Card

Now	Date:	/50
6 Months	Date:	/50
12 Months	Date:	/50

