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August 24, 2015

Urban Eco-Restoration Series

Part 2: How to create a water-saving vegetable garden



Lambley Nursery in Melbourne, Australia. Photo via Gardenista.

Few things in life are as pleasurable as eating a hearty, delicious meal of vegetables from one's own garden. But as drought persists in much of the country, including the Pacific Northwest and California, you may be wondering, like many other home gardeners, "should I feel guilty for watering my plants?" Or you may ponder whether your garden will even survive a drier climate. Fortunately, a number of tricks and strategies can help bolster a vegetable garden to resist drought and require less water overall.

Featured Event

**Tufts Fall 2015 Climate
Conference: Restoring
Water Cycles to Reverse
Global Warming**

Most importantly, a healthy garden begins with nutrient-rich, moisture-trapping soil. By using organic compost, biochar, and other soil amendments, you can create a foundation for your garden that stores water and nutrients for your plants. You have [multiple options](#) when it comes to composting, and can choose from a range of soil amendments for your garden.



Photo via Dig Your Garden

The time of year when you plant your vegetables will also affect their ability to survive the drier, scorching hot days. If you plant during the cooler months, your plants can establish deeper root systems that retain more water. By setting up a [drip irrigation system](#) you can reduce water usage by up to 50% and send the water only where it is most needed in the garden. Doing a bit of research on the stages when your vegetables require more water, likely when they are flowering and fruiting, will also help you to avoid over-watering.

Arrange your garden in a block style layout rather than in rows, which might look pretty but use water less efficiently. It is also wise to group together plants that have similar water needs and place them with "companion" plants that grow in tandem to be healthiest when they mature. To further conserve water, make sure to limit the number of water-thirsty plants, such as broccoli, that you grow.



In this conference we will focus on water's role in regulating climate through its capacity to store, move and transfer more heat than any other natural compound.

Sponsored by the Tufts Institute of the Environment.

RSVP

When

Friday, October 16, 2015, 5:30 PM - Sunday, October 18, 2015 5:00 PM (EDT).

Where

Tufts University, Medford, MA.

Fees

\$150 sliding scale

For more information [visit here](#) and [register now on Eventbrite!](#)

Other Events

Soil Not Oil International Conference

September 4-5, 2015
Memorial Civic Center Complex.
Richmond, CA.

Our Director, Adam Sacks, will be a speaker at this conference! Learn more about the conference [here](#).



Photo via Sunset Magazine

If you live in an especially hot and dry climate, choose the plants that are best suited to thrive in these conditions. For example, tomatoes do especially well in the heat and in dry years like this one can be amazingly flavorful. Other tasty drought-tolerant plants include swiss chard, Jerusalem artichokes, okra, oregano, thyme, and rosemary. Seek out additional varieties that are well-suited to drier conditions [here](#).

Drier times do not have to mean a dried-up garden without your beloved vegetables. By incorporating water-smart strategies into your garden, you can continue to enjoy the freshest, most-rewarding food that nature can offer.

Catching up with Philip Bogdonoff of BLC, Washington D.C. Chapter

In November 2014, Philip Bogdonoff attended the international climate conference that Biodiversity for a Livable Climate hosted at Tufts University. Inspired by the scientists' messages on the capacity for ecological restoration to reverse global warming, he thought, "We've got to bring this back to D.C." That is exactly what he did.

Philip, who works at a Washington law firm, is a long-time climate activist and dear friend of our restoration ecologist, Jim Laurie. At the Tufts conference he met two other D.C.-area attendees, Sudheer Shukla, an educator active with Climate Change is Elementary, and Gina Angiola, a retired ob/gyn physician active on social and political issues. They returned to Maryland and started a D.C. division of BLC and other folks have joined the mission along the way. Through organizing events,

Restoring Ecosystems to Reverse Global Warming

September 26, 2015,
10a.m.-5p.m.

Moot Court Room, David A. Clarke School of Law, University of the District of Columbia. Washington D.C.

Sponsored by Moral Action on Climate, People Demanding Action, and the University of the District of Columbia Law School.

Find out more information [here](#) and [register now on Eventbrite!](#)

For up-to-date info on our events

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About BLC

Our mission at Biodiversity for a Livable Climate is to mobilize the biosphere to restore ecosystems and reverse climate change. Our primary project is to re-direct the mainstream climate conversation from an almost exclusive concern with atmospheric carbon to encompass the entire carbon and water cycles and the regenerative role of biology.

conference calls and meetings, the group works to provide resources for residents, policymakers, and educators on the various practices that can restore soils so they more effectively capture and store atmospheric CO₂.

Learn more about our ongoing projects, upcoming events and find additional information and resources at bio4climate.org.

The group takes advantage of Washington's political environment by identifying delegates, representatives, action groups, and grassroots organizations to connect with and inform about the ecological restoration necessary to reverse global warming in the long-term. They are also [producing informational leaflets](#) on topics including permaculture, biochar, and the vital role of beavers in the ecosystem.



DC area residents listen as Adam Sacks and Jim Laurie present on the story of BLC

In early March of this year, BLC's Adam Sacks and Jim Laurie traveled from New England to D.C. for what they expected to be a rather small discussion on eco-restoration. It turned into a gathering of 60 people at Philip's community center and spurred the decision to organize a climate conference in D.C. An international climate conference in early 2016 are currently in the works.

Philip and his colleagues are now busy gearing up for Pope Francis' visit to address Congress in September. Along with other environmental organizations, climate scientists, activists, and lobbyists, the group will be congregating on the Mall on Thursday, September 24 to coincide with the pope's visit and reinforce his call to action to address climate change. They will emphasize his progressive stance on the environment and advocate for ecological restoration to reverse climate change. The group is a collaborative effort partnered under the umbrella of the [Moral Action on Climate](#) (MAC) and the D.C. BLC team is contributing materials and messaging about solutions for restoring ecosystems and the climate.

In addition, on September 26, 2015 the group will be hosting a one-day conference, *Restoring Ecosystems to Reverse Global Warming*, at the University of the District of Columbia. Presentations will introduce attendees to the biology of climate change, share information on water cycles, give examples of successful holistic

land management, and provide action steps to start restoring soils immediately.

We are thrilled with the work of Philip and his colleagues and we look forward to the September conference!