

Change Choices Good, Better, Best

Our Gardens



Stepping Up to Sustainability

Stepping Up to Sustainability – how can we live more sustainably and make positive lifestyle choices?

In 2011, WESSA launched the 'Stepping Up to Sustainability' concept. With the support of various partners, USAID and other funders, eleven 'Sustainability Commons' have been established across South Africa.

Each of these 'Sustainability Commons' will practice sustainable living by:

- reducing, sorting and managing waste better,
- installing renewable technologies,
- conserving and teaching about water management, as well as,
- providing experiential courses on biodiversity.

The goal is simple - to put into practice the lifestyle choices we all need to make! These innovative concepts are set to expand as we all 'step up to sustainability' and seek to change our environmental footprints into environmental handprints of practice for a more sustainable future!



Our gardens

Home to so many creatures ...

You do not have to go to nature reserves to see wildlife – you can attract small wildlife to your doorstep by having a wildlife-friendly garden.

We have destroyed much of the natural habitat of our country's plants and animals by building cities and farming the countryside to provide everyone with food. And while we can't have lions and zebras in our gardens, we can help to conserve many of the important, smaller creatures by providing homes and food for them in our gardens.

Wildlife gardening helps us to learn about animals and how nature works.

It can also give us great pleasure and many happy hours, watching birds, insects and other small creatures, enjoying a safe haven, in our gardens and on our doorsteps.



Did you know?

Many plants cover their seeds with soft delicious fruit to entice large mammals, bats and birds to eat them.

Did you know?

Plants attract insects and birds like sunbirds and sugarbirds to their flowers by offering them nectar as food. In return the flowers receive pollen from other flowers nearby. This fertilises the seeds so that they can grow.

Good Choices



'Wild' corners. Keep a section of your garden 'wild' and undisturbed. Grass and wildflowers can provide valuable shelter and food for wildlife. Damp rotting logs are the perfect home for many small animals.



Plant an indigenous tree during National Arbor Week. As sources of building material, food, medicine, and simple scenic beauty, trees play a vital role in the health and well-being of our gardens and homes. Every Arbor Week celebration highlights two or three specific trees.



Set up an organic compost heap. A compost heap is a good way of getting rid of organic waste without removing it from the garden. It can be very efficient if managed properly. Compost can be used to fertilise the garden or even sold to the local community.



Monitor your garden. List and map all the invasive alien plants in your garden and find out how to control them.

Change

Better Choices



Develop your grounds naturally. Put up bird baths, nest boxes and feeding trays.



Create a bird sanctuary. Developing a sanctuary for birds will greatly affect variety and density of bird populations as well as frogs and insects. The sanctuary can consist of ponds, trees, bush and undisturbed grasslands.



Dealing with pests. Rather than use chemical sprays which kill many types of insects, try attracting insects who will do the job for you. One of the best ways to deal with pests is to encourage their natural predators.



Improve lawn mowing procedure. Leaving the grass clippings on the lawn instead of bagging all clippings reduces bags used to get rid of the clippings and also reduces the amount of total waste that has to be removed from the garden. Leaving the grass clippings on the lawn will result in a greener, healthier lawn.

Change

Best Change



Choices

Plant indigenous trees and bushes. Plant indigenous plants and trees to attract wildlife such as:

- White Stinkwood, Wild Olive, Wild Figs, Forest num-num and Nana Berry for berries and fruit;
- Cape Honeysuckle, Aloes, Tree Fuschia, Natal Bottlebrush, Proteas and Red Hot Pokers for nectar;
- Indigenous grasses for seeds.



Wildlife Pond. A pond will make an attractive feature in any garden. Try to encourage frogs as they do a good job in eating slugs, one of the common pests in many gardens.

Did you know?

Grass clippings take about 7 to 14 days to break down when left on the lawn.

Did you know?

In South Africa, the first week in September each year is always celebrated as National Arbor Week.

Did you know?

There are more than 20 300 indigenous species of flowering plants that occur in South Africa.



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For **environmental resources** to support better lifestyle choices, contact WESSA Share-Net, 033-330 3931 ext 124 or 144; e-mail us at sharenet@wessa.co.za or visit our website www.wessa.org.za

main funding agent of the WESSA 'stepping up to
sustainability' project.

Practice the
lifestyle choices
we all have to make!!