



HOW TO ADAPT YOUR CURRENT GARDEN

There are many simple steps you can take to adapt your current garden to Global Gardening. You don't have to do them all but the more you do, the greater the effect will be.

YOUR CHOICE OF PLANTS

This is perhaps the most important fact to consider when you begin Global Gardening. In order to adapt to reduced water supply we must simply change the plants that grow in our garden. Try to only buy plants that can withstand high summer temperatures and wetter winter ones and, most importantly endure periods of drought.

Check out the Global Gardening Collection on the Home Page for some suggestions

AND

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

- Research the water requirements of plants before buying
- Explore how to create a gravel garden as suggested by Beth Chatto at www.bethchatto.co.uk
- Buy plants and establish root growth by planting in autumn and spring before any summer drought
- When planting, use plenty of organic matter dug in and bury wads of water-soaked newspaper under plants that need lots of water
- Water plants at night to reduce evaporation during periods of drought

THINK ABOUT THE WATER AVAILABLE TO YOU

Our water supply problem is not going to go away so gardeners need to think seriously about supply. With our rainfall becoming so unpredictable and often falling all at once, every garden should have a water butt to collect as much rain as possible.

It could also pay you to invest in a simple irrigation system to conserve water now and save money in the long term.

Check out the various options that are available for rain-harvesting and re-cycling in the Global Gardening Water Pages [1 x link]

Preserving the water in your soil is vital so make sure it does not evaporate and is used wisely and efficiently

GET TO KNOW YOUR SOIL

MAKE SURE YOU IDENTIFY YOUR SOIL as this is a crucial factor for retaining water and for the growth of plants. Soil can be seriously affected by changing temperatures and long periods of drought.

SANDY SOIL

This soil is free draining but will dry out quickly and tends to leach nutrients easily. It feels gritty when rubbed between fingers and will not hold together if formed into a ball. A sandy soil needs 60 litres per sq metre or 9-7 watering cans to keep it moist.

USEFUL TIP=Adding organic matter will help retain moisture and nutrients in sandy soils

CLAY SOIL

Clay soil is better at holding moisture and nutrients, but often goes from being too wet to too dry without much in between. It feels smooth and will shine on its surface if rubbed, it also easily forms a ball shape. Clay soil in which plants are wilting might need 81 litres of water per square metre to keep moist.

USEFUL TIP =Adding grit to clay soil helps drainage and keeps soil more open to allow air and water to move more freely.

CHALKY SOIL

This soil tends to be pale in colour with chunks of chalk within it and it will drain very freely so only suit drought loving plants.

LOAMY SOIL

Loamy soil is dark brown in colour and will roll into a sausage but break if you tried to form a ring. It will drain well but will retain moisture longer than chalky or sandy soils so various plants can survive in this

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SOIL

- Add 3 to 4 inches of moisture control compost and/or well rotted organic manure each autumn
- Reapply this to the surface of your flower beds in the spring while the ground is moist.
- An organic fertiliser in spring will help maintain nutrient levels
- BUT DO avoid turning soil too much after March as it increases water loss
- Don't allow a crust to form on the soil as water will run straight off the soil
- Never mulch a dry surface as it tends to stay dry even during wet spells
- Never mulch a frosted surface as frost can stay locked under mulch for months
- Think about using screens or wind breaks to reduce wind erosion

DID YOU KNOW?

Organic matter such as garden compost increases the moisture-holding capacity of soil by about 50mm of rain in the first year after application

LOOK OUT FOR PESTS

Warmer, humid temperatures are attracting unusual and wide new varieties of pests and diseases to the UK.

CHECK YOUR PLANTS regularly as many of these pests survive over winter due to the milder weather and will start to cause problems at the first sign of warmer weather.

Aphids, lily beetle and vine weevils are a few examples of pests that are appearing much earlier and which you will need to treat, possibly as early as March.

If you notice unexplained changes to your plants then it is advisable to take a sample to a qualified horticulturist at a specialist nursery who will identify the cause and suggest treatment.

RESIST USING CHEMICAL SOLUTIONS if you can as there are a number of more friendly alternatives that can be equally effective.

Identifying pests and diseases is an enormous subject so it would be a good idea to invest in a horticultural book to refer to. Here are a few suggestions:

- Pest and Weed expert by DG Hessayon
- RHS pest and diseases by Pippa Greenwood
- Garden detective pest and disease advice CD by Harrod Horticultural

INSPIRATIONAL GARDEN AT GREAT DIXTER, EAST SUSSEX, SEPTEMBER 2007



