

Living Green is making choices in our day-to-day lives that reduce our impact on the environment and move us in the direction of a sustainable lifestyle – one that is healthy, ecologically sound, economically viable and socially just.

SNOWSTORMS IN A WARMING WORLD

The controversy concerning global warming is certainly heating up. After two record breaking cold and snowy winters in Spokane, this winter has been unseasonably mild. But the eastern side of the country has been hit with several major snow storms, two of them considered "historic" storms. As this is being written parts of Pennsylvania received over 30 inches of snow from one storm. Even Europe is experiencing it's second harsh winter in a row.

Citing these harsh winters, critics of global warming argue that temperatures have actually dropped in recent years, contending that global warming is not occurring. Looking at the global temperature graph below from the NOAA website should clear things up.

As you can see, there has been a slight drop in temperatures from 2006-2008, but in 2009 the global temperature rose again. The graph also shows yearly variations in temperatures whether they are below or above average.

Also notice that the temperatures are still far above the baseline. It is obvious from the graph that global temperatures have not shown a serious decline or an end to global warming.

Using records that date back 130 years, 2009 tied with 2006 as the fifth warmest year on record. In fact, the 2000-2009 decade is the warmest on record.

To bring it back home to Washington State, we had two

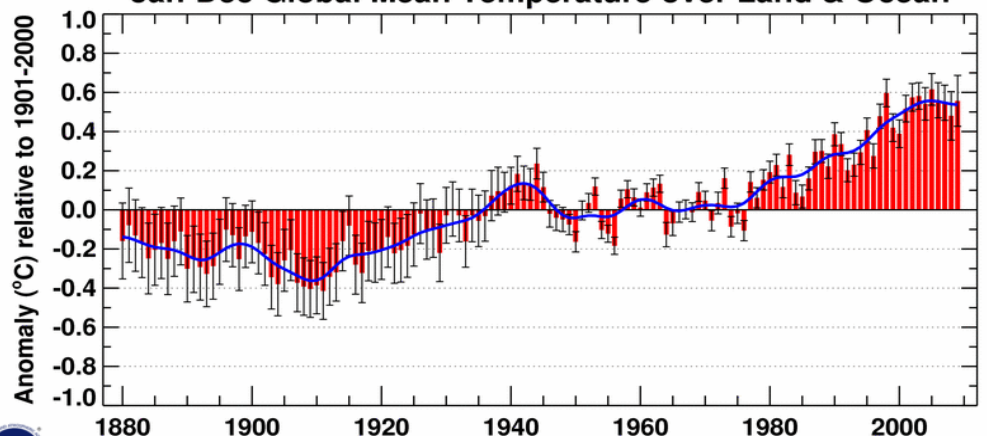
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To learn more about global climate go to www.climate.gov.

Jan-Dec Global Mean Temperature over Land & Ocean



NCDC/NESDIS/NOAA

TAKE A CLASS: WORM COMPOSTING

As spring approaches this year, consider organic gardening and the benefits it may hold for you, your family, and your garden. Organic gardeners do not use synthetic or industrial fertilizers or pesticides on their plants, but rather use only natural substances that can encourage growth and ward off pests.

The Spokane Valley YMCA has some excellent gardening classes through their Greenhouse Program. One of the most recent class topics tack-

led the exciting possibilities of vermiculture, or worm composting. In this class, participants are given the basics of vermiculture; what materials are needed, temperature requirements, and good ideas for worm food. Participants then get their hands dirty sorting out the compost, finding worms that they can bring home to start their own worm bin.

For more information on future classes offered that the YMCA Greenhouse, call (509)777-9622.



ORGANIC GARDENING FOR BEGINNERS

Organic gardening is an excellent way to take steps toward sustainability, and provides the valuable insight to natural plant growth processes and other systems in nature. Organic gardens can be a way of life—one that stresses our interconnectedness and how to recognize the rhythms of nature.

Another increasingly important reason to garden organically is to reduce chemical exposures from our food system. A recent study shows a clear link between pesticides used in food production and cancer, obesity, Alzheimer's, and other birth defects.

Like any garden, always start with a plan and prepare yourself for a bit of up front work and ongoing maintenance. This work is essential for any organic garden: ideal conditions result in healthier plants, fewer pest and disease problems,

and a more care-free garden.

Step One: Site Selection

If it's an herb or vegetable garden you've got in mind, you'll need a site that gets at least six hours of sun per day and has good drainage. Once you have a site selected, observe how much sun it gets for a day or two and any shade that might protect more sensitive plants like lettuce.

Step Two: Amend the Soil

By doing a few simple tests, you can analyze what kind of soil you have, and figure out ways to improve it. Squeeze a handful of moderately moist soil, and if it falls apart too easily you might have sandy soil. If it stays compressed and doesn't crumble, it would be considered clay. The in-between type is loam soil, which would stay loosely compressed in your hand but fall apart when poked.



Marigolds protecting a pea patch.



Pesticide Free Zone, Washington Toxics Coalition.

Organic Gardening, *continued*

The key to organic gardening is healthy soil. This usually requires the addition of organic material, be it compost, aged manure, shredded leaves, etc. Stay away from saw dust or wood chips. A soil rich in organic material will be full of life, from microbes to beneficial insects, will hold water better, and does not need petrochemical fertilizers. It also makes strong, healthy plants resistant to disease and pests.

Amending with compost is easiest and it is available in home and garden centers; or make your own.

Step Three: Plant Selection – Nursery or Seed?

Not all nurseries offer organic starts. Be sure to closely inspect any plant before you bring it home. Look for signs of insect or disease problems.

It's become easier to find organically-grown plants in many home and garden centers. The best thing to do would be to grow your own plants from seed. This way you can be assured of strong organically grown seedlings. If you are starting your garden early in the season, you can select organic seeds and start your own plants.

Three Things to Do For Your Garden

The first is to **Feed the Soil**, which means compost and mulch, mulch, mulch. The second is to **Focus on Prevention**, which is the most time consuming part. Pay attention when planting to have good

spacing and placement. Also pay attention while they grow – it's easy to spot pests and diseases when they begin which allows you to stop them before they get out of hand. And the third is to **Use the Simplest Solution**. When a problem begins, start small. Aphids can be sprayed off plants with a hose, but when ignored they are sure to multiply. The next step up is to learn about the many homemade sprays that can be used to repel pests. To kill pests use safe insecticidal soaps. Most of these will also allow beneficial insects to survive.

Resources

The Green Zone, 210 N Havana, www.thegreenzone.org
The Green Zone offers indoor and outdoor exhibits, as well as various classes.

WSU-Spokane County Extension, Master Gardeners, 210 N Havana, 477-2181.
www.spokane-county.wsu.edu
The WSU Master Gardener Plant Clinic and Resource Center offers a variety of organic gardening tips and classes.

The Spokane Regional Solid Waste System, 221 N Wall, ste 410, 625-6580.

www.solidwaste.org. Master Composters training and they hold a Compost Fair twice a year at Finch Arboretum.
P.E.A.C.H., 2015 N Division, 435-5210. www.peachlocal.com
P.E.A.C.H. holds classes through their Farm School of Small Sustainable Agriculture, including an apprentice program.

Companion Planting

Companion planting is an ancient farming strategy. Many gardens integrate certain vegetables, herbs and flowers with other crops to improve yield and to organically deter pests. Since all things are truly connected in nature, an organic garden uses the living ecosystem to attract beneficial insects, deter problem pests, and enrich the soil with helpful bacteria and fungi.

Mix up monocrops – Read “Carrots love Tomatoes” by Louise Riotte, and search online for the best combinations.

Interplant herbs and flowers – this can attract beneficial insects and birds to control pests.

Know the weeds from the “volunteers” – Weeds are simply the plants that grow without being intentionally planted. Watch to see which will attract beneficial insects, and leave a few growing, but try to stop them before they go to seed.

Start with these:

- Marigolds – common pest repellent.
- Mints – including catnip. These help to repel aphids, but can take over quickly, so place them in containers around the garden.
- Sweet Basil – also a potent pest repellent.

UPCOMING EVENTS

3/6 2nd Chance Kitchen and Garden Sale, Peter's & Sons Flowers and Gifts, 512 E Pacific. 9am-3pm.

3/9 Spokane Green Drinks featuring Save Our Wild Salmon at The Two Seven Public House. Begins at 5:30pm.

3/20 3rd Annual Call to Care Conference, "Organizing for the Work of Environmental Stewardship". Registration is required, includes lunch. Contact Lynda Maraby, (206) 579-1884 or faithandenvironment@gmail.com, to register or for more information.

3/22 Spokane River Forum All day conference. Learn more and register at www.spokaneriver.net

3/22-4/24 Master Composter Classes. Learn simple, natural ways to build healthy soil and reduce waste in your community. Visit www.solidwaste.org, or

call, 625-6800 for more information.

3/27 Earth Hour at 8:30pm local time people and entire cities across the globe will turn off lights for one hour. Learn more at www.myearthhour.org

3/27 P.E.A.C.H: Hoop Houses and Hoopla. Explore the importance of soil, wonders of compost, and the mysteries of the hoop house. 10am-4pm. 10425 S. Andrus Rd, Cheney WA. \$35 per person, visit www.peachlocal.com or call 509-981-8560.

3/27 Eco Depot Solar Power Class. Learn the basics of Solar Power, and what is required to get started. \$35, at 1326 E. Sprague Ave. Call Nadine Sullivan at 509-924-8803 or email to register: nadine@ecodepotinc.com

4/10 Spring Into Action Earth Day events at Valley Mission Park. 10-12pm

4/10 P.E.A.C.H. Great Goats! Learn about milking, cheese-making, anatomy, and husbandry techniques. **9:30am-4pm.** **10425 S. Andrus Rd, Cheney WA. \$35 per person, visit peachlocal.com or call 509-981-8560 for more information.**

4/17 Earth Day. Come celebrate with music, food, and community booths on Main Street (between Browne and Division). 11am until midnight. Visit: www.earthdayspokane.org for more information.

4/24 Arbor Day Compost Fair. Finch Arboretum, from 11am-2pm. Call 625-6800 for more information.

4/24 Dishman Hills Work Day Help the Inland Northwest Land Trust clean up, see inlandnwland-trust.org for more info.

5/8 Garden Expo Over 200 garden-related exhibitors at SCC, 1810 N Greene St. 9am-5pm.

Snowstorms, *continued from p. 1*

record setting cold and snowy winters out of the last three, but more importantly, Washington has experienced ten summers in a row with above normal temperatures for the months June through August.

Warming has not been globally uniform. Some areas have in fact, cooled slightly over the last century. But only global average temperatures can accurately indicate signs of global warming, not local weather.

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