

Week Two Newsletter

Why Sustainable Agriculture Matters

Sustainable agriculture is a way of farming that protects the environment, supports local communities, and keeps farms productive for future generations. By using sustainable practices, farmers and gardeners can improve soil health, conserve water, reduce chemical use, and support pollinators and biodiversity. These practices help prevent soil erosion, maintain nutrient-rich soil, and reduce the impact of farming on nearby waterways. Sustainable agriculture also strengthens local economies by supporting small farms, farmers' markets, and community-based food systems.

In addition, these practices help build resilient local food systems that can adapt to changing environmental conditions, such as droughts, floods, or extreme weather. Even small actions in a home garden, like composting kitchen scraps, using rain barrels, or planting pollinator-friendly crops, can contribute to healthier soil, cleaner water, and more sustainable food production. By practicing sustainability at any scale, we can protect natural resources, foster biodiversity, and ensure that future generations have the land and resources they need to grow food.

Over 71 Million

households practice home gardening in the U.S.



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Sustainable Gardening Practices

You don't need a large farm to practice sustainable agriculture. Home gardeners can make a big difference by incorporating simple techniques into their gardens. Composting is an easy way to recycle food scraps and yard waste into nutrient-rich soil, while rainwater harvesting using rain barrels helps conserve water for irrigation.

Mulching and planting cover crops protect the soil, retain moisture, and prevent erosion, while choosing crops suited to your local area ensures healthy growth and higher yields. In West Virginia, beginner-friendly crops such as tomatoes, peppers, lettuce, beans, and herbs are ideal for small gardens and can thrive with these sustainable practices.



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Resources to Get Started

Getting started with a sustainable home garden is easier with the right support and guidance. Local Conservation District offices offer workshops on composting, rain barrels, and soil health. The WVU Extension Service provides seasonal planting guides, soil and pest management advice, free soil testing, and tips for growing specialty crops.

Farmers' markets and community gardens are excellent places to learn from experienced growers, find seeds, and connect with other gardeners. Online gardening guides and publications also offer step-by-step instructions for planning, planting, and maintaining a sustainable garden. Start small, keep a gardening log, and focus on one sustainable practice at a time, your garden and the environment will benefit!

