



# River-Friendly Landscaping Green Gardener at Home Garden Checklist



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check all the features/practices that you believe apply to your garden.**

**Small Actions make a difference. You can start by doing a practice or two today!**

## **Building Healthy Soil**

1.  Soil has been tested to identify need for appropriate amendments.
2.  Soil has been tested to identify any contaminants.
3.  Garden beds are prepared by hand rather than with a tiller.
4.  After initial preparation, beds are maintained with little or no tilling.
5.  Sheet mulching is used to establish planting areas or pathways, and as a way to control weeds while improving soil. (Weed cloth is not used.)
6.  Soil is protected from compaction with clearly defined paths and or raised beds.
7.  Soil is amended with compost, which increases water holding capacity and reduces erosion.
8.  Cover crops are grown to enrich the soil.



## **Reducing Waste in the Garden**

9.  Active compost bin or worm bin.
10.  Leaves, chipped plant debris, compost, or other organic materials are used as mulch.
11.  Garden trimmings are used on site for composting or mulching and/or disposed of in green waste cart.
12.  Plant waste is minimized by not overplanting, overwatering, or overfertilizing.
13.  Pruning is minimized by choosing plants that are appropriate for the space when mature.
14.  Sheared hedges are not included in the garden.
15.  Clippings are left on the lawn after mowing.
16.  Recycled or salvaged products are used for artistic or functional purposes.
17.  Plastic nursery pots and trays are recycled; biodegradable containers are preferred.



## **Conserving Water**

18.  Local California natives and plants from Mediterranean-type climates are featured (more than 50% of the garden area is occupied by plants adapted to summer-dry climate).

19.  Plants are grouped by water needs.
20.  Plants are grouped by sun exposure.
21.  Lawn is minimized to a functional size or eliminated.
22.  Efficient irrigation (drip, rotary nozzles, timers, controllers, etc.) is in place and functioning properly.
23.  Watering occurs according to need, not a pre-determined schedule.
24.  Irrigation system is checked for leaks, breaks, and misdirected sprinklers. Repairs are promptly made.
25.  Compost is used to improve water retention and mulch is applied to soil surface in garden beds.
26.  Rainwater collection is in place.



### **Creating Wildlife Habitat**

27.  Wildlife is encouraged with a variety of plants that flower and set fruit at different times of year.
28.  Water is provided with a small pond, bird bath, or water dish.
29.  Year-round protective cover is provided with a planting of evergreen trees/shrubs, logs, rocks, or brush pile.
30.  Garden structure is diverse with layers of ground covers, herbaceous vegetation (non-woody) and/or grasses, shrubs of various heights, and trees.
31.  Leave some areas of the garden somewhat untidy – let flowers go to seed to provide food for birds, and leave dead leaves and stalks to shelter over-wintering insects.
32.  Leave a small area of soil uncovered to encourage native bees.
33.  Local California native plants are featured (more than 50% of garden plants are California natives).



### **Protecting Water, Waterways, and Air Quality**

34.  Permeable materials are chosen for patios, driveways, or other hard surfaces, to allow water and impurities to soak into the soil rather than run off.
35.  Steep slopes are terraced to reduce rainwater run-off and prevent erosion.
36.  Soil is contoured and shaped to slow, spread, and sink rain water into the soil.
37.  Nearly all soil is covered by mulch or plants.
38.  Synthetic fertilizers are not used.
39.  An integrated approach is used for managing weeds, insect pests, and diseases with least toxic controls used first for safety of children, pets and wildlife.
40.  Pests and their damage are tolerated to the degree possible. Perfection is not the goal.
41.  Beneficial insects are encouraged through plant choice.
42.  Hand or electric tools are used instead of gas-powered tools.



## **Landscaping Locally**

- 43.  Garden evaluated to determine amount of sun exposure each area receives.
- 44.  Use California native plants appropriate for the Sacramento Region.
- 45.  Use plants from areas with Mediterranean-type climate.
- 46.  Food for wildlife is available through plant selection.
- 47.  Organic vegetable garden provides “local” food.
- 48.  No invasive species have been planted, and any invasive weeds on the property are being managed to prevent their spread.



## **Saving Energy**

- 49.  Trees and shrubs are selected and placed to reduce energy requirements.  
For example, deciduous trees are planted on the west and south sides of the house to provide shade during the summer and allow sunlight to warm the house in the winter.
- 50.  Local garden products and suppliers have been selected.
- 51.  Air conditioner is shaded.
- 52.  Outdoor lights are energy efficient or solar, and are on a timer or turned off when not in use.
- 53.  Outdoor lights are dim or directed downwards to minimize light pollution.
- 54.  Pumps for water features are solar powered or energy efficient.



**The River-Friendly Green Gardener Checklist was adapted from the Bay-Friendly Gardening Checklist, Stopwaste.org, Alameda County.**