

Reduce Reuse Recycle – In your yard

The first day of Spring has passed and as we watch the snow melt, it is time to think about getting yards going for the summer.

There are lots of ways to reduce, reuse and recycle in yards. The first thing to look at is saving water. There are a number of tricks and techniques to save water. One is to collect water in a water barrel or other types of containers. Now is a good time to set up water barrels or just buckets as the snow melts and the rains start to come in March and April. (April showers bring May flowers!) Mosquito larvae can become a problem in late May or June, so putting screens over your water containers at that time is a good idea.

Biodiverse yards (in other words, not just grass) and longer grass both use less water to stay green. Another benefit to biodiversity in your yard is that you will feed the bees and a number of birds. One of the first foods for bees are the detested lawn weed, dandelions. However, it is a mistake to underestimate the dandelion as it is a most useful plant as all its parts are edible and delicious with many recipes from wine, to fresh greens to cookies.

Eating fresh food from your gardens is another way to reduce waste. Growing your own herbs, vegetables, berries and greens are easy ways to reduce waste and save money. Edible plants can be tucked here and there in flower beds, potted on your patio or hung from trees and beside doors. Combining bee friendly flowers and edible plants is a lovely way to decorate a yard.

Composting is a way to use food waste in your kitchen. After all that waste has composted, it can make a great addition to your gardens to add nutrients and make them more productive. Making your own compost saves buying it in those plastic bags at the hardware store. Another way to avoid that plastic is by connecting with a local farmer and seeing if you can get compost from them hauled with a reusable bin or bucket.

In the winter or prior to summer berries and insects, many people like to feed the birds. There are a number of creative bird feeders people can make. The easiest can be to spread some peanut butter or other nut butter on a pine cone, roll it in bird seed and hang it from a tree. Bird feeders can also be made from milk cartons, coffee cans and many other containers. These are great crafts to do with kids.

There is a big movement to minimalism these days with the focus being on owning less. Spring is a great time to get to know your neighbours and instead of having to own every type of tool, tool borrowing or trading are other ways to reduce. You may need to own your own hoses, sprinklers and other tools, but neighbourhood tool shares for things like pole pruners, chainsaws and other seldom used items is another way to reduce.

Please feel free to email me at Golden@wildsight.ca to give me feedback on this article and share your ideas and questions regarding Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.