

Avoid these hazardous garden products and practices

ARTIFICIAL FERTILISERS

Artificial fertilisers deplete soil of organic matter, damaging the soil structure by reducing its water holding capacity, drainage and air circulation, affecting soil and plant health. Nitrate-based fertilisers increase soil acidity, locking up essential minerals whilst releasing others harmful to plants. **'Slow release' fertilisers** can burn delicate plant roots.

MISLEADING CLAIMS

Some pesticides, fertilisers, soil conditioners and mulches make **'natural'** and **'organic'** claims but may not be certified organic products. While they may be of natural and 'organic' origin, like animal manures, compost and mulches, they may not be 100% natural or meet certified organic standards and could contain hazardous chemical residues including pesticides and antibiotics.

'FEED AND WEED' LAWN CARE

Feed and weed products contain artificial fertilisers, herbicides and synthetic wetting agents that cause several problems:

- By simultaneously encouraging lawn growth and applying herbicide, grasses become weakened and may be burned.
- Herbicide vapours can drift, harm nearby plants and neighbouring gardens.
- Chemical residues make lawns unsafe for kids, pets and wildlife.

- The long term effects of chemical wetting agents on soil and plants is unknown.

SYNTHETIC PESTICIDES

Synthetic pesticides such as insecticides, herbicides and fungicides are hazardous to health and the environment and disrupt the natural balance of the garden ecosystem.

Choose these safer garden products and practices

CERTIFIED ORGANIC

Certified organic and biodynamic products are produced in accordance with independently verified standards. Products are free from genetic engineering and chemical residues. Organic and biodynamic growing methods are healthier for the planet, reduce harmful greenhouse gases, and are safer around children and pets.

HEALTHY SOIL

Healthy soil is the foundation of any organic garden. Biological products add minerals to soil, improving structure and health without harming soil life or depleting the soil organic content. Certified organic and biodynamic fertilisers, soil conditioners and mulches, used according to directions, also help to protect waterways from nutrient run-off.

ORGANIC WETTING AGENTS

Certified organic wetting agents readily and harmlessly biodegrade in the soil. They contain plant-based soaps, saponins and microbial wetting agents. Organic wetting agents help to reduce surface run-off and make organic fertilisers last longer.

GENUINELY BIODEGRADABLE

Protect grey-water systems, plants and soil by using only **genuinely biodegradable** detergents and cleaners that have low sodium and phosphorous content and fewer artificial additives. **Green cleaners** include soap flakes, 100% vegetable soaps, vinegar and bicarbonate of soda. All are safe for use with grey water systems.

ORGANIC GARDENING MADE EASY

The *Easy Guide to Organic Gardening* helps you avoid harmful products and practices, while providing safer solutions for creating healthy, sustainable gardens that won't harm children, pets, wildlife or the environment.

Organic gardening essentials:

- Nurturing living soil.
- Having a diversity of plants and organisms for a healthy balance.
- Developing a sense of curiosity and courage to experiment!

YOU CAN REDUCE GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS BY GOING ORGANIC!

Did you know that a significant amount of Australian greenhouse emissions come from chemically intensive agricultural production?

By choosing locally produced organic food, growing your own and gardening organically you can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Organic growing techniques naturally 'lock up' greenhouse gases in the higher levels of organic matter in the soil.



Safer Solutions
Keeping your home **healthy** and **green**

For more information visit the Safer Solutions website where **ABC gardening expert Jerry Coleby-Williams** answers your frequently asked gardening questions.

www.saferolutions.org.au



TOTAL ENVIRONMENT CENTRE



our environment *it's a living thing*

This project has been assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust.

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EASY GUIDE to ORGANIC GARDENING

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