

Home > Plastics At Home > Home & Garden > In The Garden > **Want a Greener Garden?**

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5 ways plastics can help

Veggies, succulents, roses... Growing a successful garden can be a lot of work. Our collection of gardening ideas can make cultivating your fabulous plot of land a bit easier.

Durable, water resistant plastics are a natural in the garden. Here are five innovative ways plastic tools can help you green your garden ... with the added bonus of being planet-friendly, too.

1. Rain, rain, DON'T go away

Capturing and reusing rainwater not only helps your flora flourish, it's also a great way to conserve precious water and reduce storm water runoff... particularly important in areas prone to drought. Your setup could range from very basic—plastic buckets that catch rain from downspouts—to tough plastic rain barrels and more advanced irrigation systems that water your garden automatically using gravity. These rain barrels, hoses, and piping typically are made with durable plastics that will last a very long time, helping you make the most of spring thunderstorms—and reducing water waste—year after year.



2. Make treasure from trash

What to do with those veggie peelings, eggshells, stale bread, or other unused food from your kitchen? Instead of going to waste in a landfill, these nutrient rich scraps can transform into rich compost that's great for your plants. Choose the right size container for your space, follow the easy directions (some sun, moisture, mixing) and your compost should be ready in a few months. Purpose-built compost bins made with plastics (even recycled plastics!) often have features, such as hatches at the bottom, that make composting easier and cleaner. And since plastics resist weather damage and typically won't rot, your bin can last for years, further helping reduce waste.



3. Hire some new assistants

Looking for some low-maintenance pest control? Birds eat garden destroyers such as grasshoppers, aphids, larvae, moths, slugs, and beetles (curse you, Japanese beetle!), so installing some sturdy plastic birdhouses and feeders can attract new feathered friends to help your garden grow. You can find a wide range of long lasting plastic birdhouses and feeders at your local garden store or online, in multiple designs to coordinate with your home and garden's style and décor. Some are even made with recycled plastics, which means the milk jug you recycled may come back as a cozy, weather-resistant home for your new backyard neighbors.



4. Maximize your gardening space

Think you don't have the space to grow a thriving garden? Think again. Thanks to innovations in plastics, you can maximize your gardening space by growing plants, flowers, and even edible herbs and vegetables on a vertical surface—known as a “living wall.” While vertical gardening has been around for centuries, it has *really* caught on in the past few years. From do-it-yourself wall gardens made from used plastic bottles to attractive hi-tech systems made with recycled plastics, vertical gardens offer the chance to bring greenery into areas where horizontal space for traditional gardening is limited.



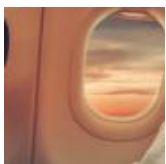
5. Box it in

Raised bed gardening is really useful in areas with poor soil. Build four low walls, fill the space with soil and compost, and you've got a garden. Lumber made with plastics is especially well suited for these walls—it's durable, water resistant, long lasting, and made to avoid rotting. It can be easily cut and fastened like wood, but it's easy to clean and holds its color or shape over long periods. And today much of this plastic lumber is made with recycled materials—such as the plastic detergent bottles you recycle in your curbside bin—which helps reduce waste.



As you're prepping your garden this year, remember that it's becoming easier and easier to find attractive outdoor furniture and garden tools made with recycled plastics. Seeking out recycled plastic products helps keep used plastics out of landfills to live another life—so they'll help make your garden even greener. Happy gardening!

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