

CREATION CARE TIPS

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS

Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded.

Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations. Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us.

A fragile world, entrusted by God to human care, challenges us to devise intelligent ways of directing, developing, and limiting our power.

- Excerpts from Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*



CREATION CARE IN THE COLUMBUS DIOCESE: STS. PETER & PAUL SCHOOL - WELLSTON

Sts. Peter & Paul School has created an outdoor classroom, complete with a vegetable garden, to teach sustainable gardening to students. Mrs. Wiseman's first and second grade classes plant, care for, and harvest the vegetables they grow. Students then serve the vegetables for lunch in the cafeteria to encourage one other to make healthier food choices. While learning the practices of sustainable gardening, the students also learn responsibility and experience the satisfaction that comes from hard work.

Learn more at <https://columbuscatholic.org/care-for-creation>

FIRST STEP: CREATE A COMPOST PILE & FEED IT

Compost can enrich topsoils with organic matter that holds water, supports microorganisms, provides nutrients, and eases root growth, all at no cost. Compost can be especially important in regions where soils have large clay content. A compost pile requires a small plot of land (about 4 feet by 4 feet) where yard debris and vegetable scraps can be deposited in a ratio of 3 to 1 and periodically turned. There are also composting devices on the market that may increase the ease and speed of composting, improve the visual appearance for your neighbors, and keep undesirable wildlife out of your pile. OSU Extension's *Composting at Home* publication provides valuable information (online at go.osu.edu/home-compost).

SECOND STEP: PLANT NATIVES

Choose a variety of native plants and trees for church and home landscapes. Natives are adapted to a particular region's temperature ranges, rainfall patterns, and soils. In Ohio, this means that natives are adapted to our hot summers and cold winters and can survive prolonged dry spells. Therefore, natives need less attention than other plants to thrive. Native plants also restore biodiversity to a landscape. For instance, insects that feed on native plants in turn become food for the native birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals that make Ohio so ecologically interesting. Lists of Ohio native plants for all types of ecosystems are available from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (online at ohiodnr.gov/gonative).

TAKE A STEP TOGETHER: ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY OR PRAYER GARDEN

All churches have parishioners who struggle with food insecurity and depend on food banks. Typically, food banks offer canned goods, which are high in salt and sugar and lack important vitamins. A community garden may supply fresh fruits and vegetables to people in need while creating a ministry that engages parishioners of all ages. Youth volunteers may have their first opportunity to care for something greater than themselves. Regardless of your circumstances, there is a community garden design to suit your needs and ambitions. For information on how to start, plant, and maintain a community garden, see OSU Extension (online at go.osu.edu/co-gardens). Similarly, the right plants with the addition of a bench and statue of St. Francis can create a prayer garden, turning an underused lawn into a peaceful retreat.

