

THE ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION CAMPS GUIDE TO

ECO-RESTORATION AT HOME



Thank you for your generous contribution to Ecosystem Restoration Camps, and welcome to our growing movement of Earth restorers! Your contribution will directly support the restoration of arid, degraded land into thriving, natural ecosystems. As an extra thank you to everyone joining us during the holiday season, we have put together this guide to inspire you with ideas for your own mini ecosystem restoration projects to do at home. Many of these projects have the added benefit of being great to do with children, and will inspire in them a greater appreciation of the natural world around them.

We believe that big changes can come from the collective activities of a few committed individuals. No matter where you are in the world, or how big your home or garden is, we can all take action to connect with nature, encourage biodiversity in our area and inspire those around us to do the same!

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HOME COMPOSTING

What you'll need:



- 4 old pallets*
- Some garden space
- Thick wire and wire cutters

*You can often find discarded ones in great condition at the back of shops, building sites and in skips. Check for the IPPC stamp and the treatment code to ensure the wood has been heat treated rather than chemically treated.



Good to know

Don't have your own garden to make compost in? There are plenty of other options to ensure that your food scraps don't end up in landfill. There may be a collection scheme for food waste in your local area. You could see if any of your friends, family or neighbours have an outdoor compost bin you can share, or find a community gardening project near you that has one. Food scraps can be kept in a container in the freezer until you are ready to take them to a compost bin.

You could even look into getting an indoor wormery - a neat system that uses worms to digest your kitchen scraps, turning them into super-fertile compost.

Why compost? Food waste that is sent to landfill will decay in the absence of oxygen, producing the powerful greenhouse gas methane. Organic waste that is composted receives proper aeration, allowing it to be broken down by microbes and avoiding methane emissions. It also makes great fertiliser!

To make an outdoor compost bin, stand 4 pallets upright to form a square, then secure the corners together with lengths of wire. To build a second bin, simply attach 3 more pallets to your existing structure. You should position the structure in a shady area with room around it so that you can turn the heap every couple of months. When it's time to turn the compost or empty the bin, simply undo the wire ties either side of the front pallet and let it fall forward so that you can easily access the compost. Then reattach the pallet with the wire. Fill your bin with a mixture of green plant material, kitchen scraps (no dairy, meat or fish products), twigs and cardboard. Depending on the season (the composting process slows down during the colder months), your compost will be ready after 6 to 12 months.

PAPER PLANT POTS



What you'll need:



- Newspaper sheets (or other scrap paper)
- Compost
- Seeds

These little paper starter pots are quick and easy to make and perfect for planting seeds indoors. Simply fill them with compost, sow your seeds of choice and position them on a tray by the window sill until the seedlings are ready to transplant outside. The pots won't leak so long as you don't over water them. The benefit of using paper is that you can place the pots directly into the soil when transplanting without disturbing the seedling, and the pot will biodegrade nicely as the plant grows. You could even make them from scrap wrapping paper, as long as it's not the glossy kind as this won't biodegrade as quickly.

Winter is the perfect time for planting seeds indoors ready to be transplanted in the spring. Why not make 2019 the year you start growing some of your own food? Plants such as chillies, herbs, peas and leafy greens are easy to grow and maintain, and yield great results. In an age of ever-increasing consumerism and convenience, growing your own food is a small act of rebellion that is great for the planet, your health and your wallet!

Good to know

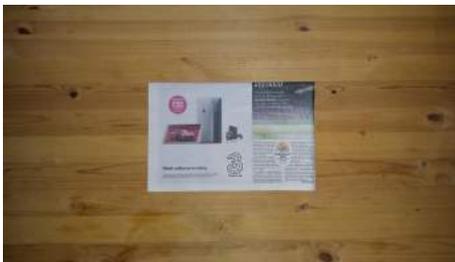
Most newspapers now use vegetable-based inks such as soy ink which is biodegradable and non-toxic.



How to make a paper pot



Lay out your sheet of paper



Fold it in half crosswise



Fold it in half crosswise again...



... and again, then unfold to make a crease down the middle



Open out the top left corner and fold it down into the middle



Press down the folds



Flip the paper over



Repeat on the other corner



Press down the folds to make a triangle shape



Lift the wing on the right side and fold it over on to the left side



You should now have a nice smooth shape



Repeat on the other side



Now take the left wing and fold it into the centre crease...



...like this



Repeat with the right wing



Flip the paper over and repeat on the other side to get this shape



Fold the wings into the middle crease again so that they are double folded



Repeat on all sides to get this shape



Take one of the flat end flaps and fold it down



Repeat on the other side to get this shape



Finally, open out your pot so that it sits upright



If you're not going to start planting straight away, you can skip the final step and store your pots in a neat pile.

Happy planting!

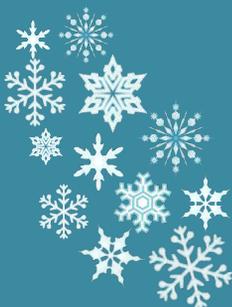
FAT CAKES

What you'll need:

- Lard, suet or coconut oil
- String

And any or all of the following:

- Oats
- Peanuts
- Raisins
- Sultanas
- Breadcrumbs
- Cake crumbs
- Polenta
- Grated cheese
- Seeds



Good to know

You can make these using leftover animal fat from your festive meals, but avoid using turkey fat as it won't set properly and can rub on to birds' feathers, preventing them from being able to fly. Coconut oil is a great vegan alternative to animal fats as it sets well and has high nutritional value.

Fat cakes for birds are often shop-bought, but you can just as easily make your own from kitchen scraps and leftover ingredients. Wild birds have a pretty tough time in winter, so they'll love these high-energy fat cakes as an additional food source when their natural food is scarce. To make, simply mix all your dry ingredients together in a bowl. Use a ratio of 2 parts dry ingredients to 1 part fat. Melt the fat in a saucepan, then add to the dry ingredients and mix well.

When the fat has cooled to become semi-solid, form the mixture into small balls with some string poked through the middle and a knot tied on one end to stop the ball from sliding off. Leave in the fridge overnight to set. Use the string to hang the fat cake outside in a place where you will be able to see the birds come to feed. You can store any additional cakes you make in the freezer and take them out to use throughout the winter.



PLANTING WILDFLOWERS



Planting native wildflowers is a great way to improve biodiversity in your garden or local area. Wildflowers provide food, shelter and breeding grounds for pollinating insects, and their roots keep the surrounding soil healthy and stable. They can transform bare urban spaces into beautiful, vibrant habitats. You can easily grow native wildflowers in your own garden or yard with a little soil preparation, or if you're feeling bold you can reclaim your local green space and plant a wildflower garden on a public patch of land, known as guerilla gardening.

What you'll need:

- Native wildflower seed mix
- Powdered clay or a clay type soil
- Compost



Good to know

To give your seeds the best chance of germinating, you should time your seed bombing to occur just before heavy rains, ideally in spring and autumn when it is more likely to rain throughout the season.

A popular form of guerilla gardening is seed bombing, which allows you to scatter seeds in hard-to-reach areas. The 'bombs' are small, truffle-like balls made by mixing one part seeds, five parts compost and three parts potter's clay powder or clay type soil. Add water to the mixture until you get the consistency of cookie dough (more water will be needed if using powdered clay). Shape the mixture into firm golf-sized balls and leave out to harden in the sun for 24 hours. You can fling your seed bombs into disused urban patches such as roundabouts, neglected flower beds or vacant lots (avoid industrial sites and plots awaiting development). As the clay breaks down, the seeds will germinate and take root, whilst the compost fertilises the soil for the seedlings to grow in.

BUILDING A BUG HOTEL

For the structure (any of the following):

- Old wooden pallets
- Planks of wood
- Bricks, preferably those with holes through them
- Old terracotta pots
- Old roof tiles or roofing felt

For the filling (any of the following):

- Straw
- Moss
- Dry leaves
- Woodchips
- Old logs
- Bark
- Pine cones
- Soil
- Dead hollow plant stems
- Strips of wood
- Any other natural materials you can find



Insects, the beginning of life in many ecosystems, are disappearing due to climate change, urbanisation, and the use of pesticides for industrial agriculture. By building a bug hotel in your garden from recycled and natural materials you can provide a haven for insects and other small creatures to live in.



The design of your bug hotel will vary depending on the space and materials you have available, but the basic structure is always the same: you need to build a strong, solid frame with multiple levels. An easy way of doing this is by stacking old pallets on top of each other. You could also build your own structure using planks of wood, and create 'rooms' using bricks or old terracotta pots. Once your structure is ready, you can start filling. The idea is to provide all sorts of spaces for different creatures: holes and small tunnels for bees, bark and dead wood for beetles, woodlice and other creepy crawlies, dry leaves and straw for ladybirds and other bugs. Larger holes near the base may even attract other creatures such as hedgehogs and frogs. Filling your multi-storey hotel is a great opportunity to get creative and recycle a variety of scrap materials from your home and garden. Finally, cover the top of your structure with roof tiles or roofing felt to keep it relatively dry inside.

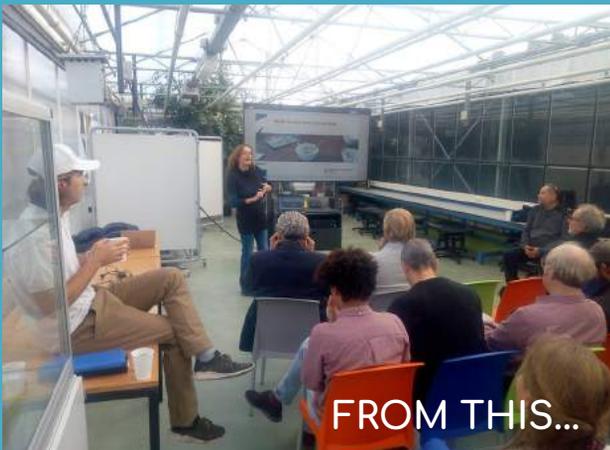
FORMING AN ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION COUNCIL

Ready to take your ecosystem restoration action to the next level? One of the most powerful ways of working together to restore the earth is to form an Ecosystem Restoration Council in your area. Ecosystem Restoration Councils are groups of people living in the same geographical area that would like to work together to do restoration actions in their communities and work together to establish camps. We already have two councils, one in Holland, and one in California.

Please contact members@ecosystemrestorationcamps.org if you would like support in setting up a council in your area.

The activities your council could do include:

1. Finding degraded land in your community and creating a restoration action plan and action days to restore it
2. Researching spaces for a camp in your area
3. Working together and helping each other to compost, plant trees, collect litter, clean rivers and support local wildlife



Together We Can Restore The Earth.

The Time Is Now.

www.ecosystemrestorationcamps.org

