



Margie Baker, Scott Sampson, Claire Spampinato, and Corey Ullman discussing Greener Gardening tips

### Greener Gardening by Kit Raven

I recently hosted a “party with a purpose,” an event cosponsored by aFewSteps.org and Swarthmore Horticultural Society. The purpose was to talk about how to have a greener garden by making your home garden more environmentally friendly. The reason for having a party was that people are more likely to come to a party in someone’s home than attend a meeting in a public place, and most importantly, people will actually carry out ideas that they talk about at a party and have been intending to do something about. Hmm, Tupperware meets modern social and environmental consciousness.

I became intrigued with the idea of a party with a purpose when I went to one of aFewSteps.org’s parties on the theme of lowering your carbon footprint around the end-of-year holidays. To my surprise, I found myself easily carrying out suggestions made by neighbors or people I know, such as ask your young adult child what is one thing she would really like that she might not get for herself, then just get that. No useless gifts, no endless shopping and wrapping.

So I polled Swarthmore Horticultural Society’s gardeners on what they felt was most important for home gardeners to do to be environmentally sensitive, have a lovely garden, and enjoy it. Some of our ideas have already been printed in the Swarthmorean in “Green Tips” from aFewSteps.org. Short articles explaining some of the tips in more detail are on the websites, aFewSteps.org and swarthmorehorticulturalsociety.org.

The ideas are simple. Start with enjoying your garden (if you like it, over time you'll learn more about it and take better care of it) and building up your soil with natural nutrients like leaf mulch. Picking the right plant for the right place, in terms of the amount of light, water, and protection needed, will foster vigorous growth. Great choices can include native plants, which provide food and shelter for wildlife, hardy plants, which tolerate many conditions and will grow for almost anyone, and drought-tolerant plants, which need little or no water once established. These healthy, beautiful, interesting plants need much less of your time and water. Being grown in the appropriate location, in enriched soil and happily mulched, increases plants' success, and means fewer trips for you to the nursery to buy remedies or replacements. Green garden: less money, less work, more to enjoy!

If you're curious to know more about greener gardening and would like to host or attend a party with people you know, contact Swarthmore Horticultural Society, [swarthmorehortsociety@gmail.com](mailto:swarthmorehortsociety@gmail.com), who can help make it happen.