

Easing Toward Organic: A rationalist's approach to reconsidering conventional gardening and moving toward a sustainable gardening methodology.

By Kat Satnik, Kittitas County Master Gardener Coordinator

- Let's assume organic means this:
 - No unnecessary chemicals, approved for organic use or otherwise
 - Chemicals are replaced by forethought, education, and time
 - Sanitation and monitoring are crucial
 - Increasing fertility of soil and ecological value of space
 - Greater numbers and higher diversity of insects and birds
 - Fluffier, more absorbent soil
 - Willingness to accept some loss of current artificial beauty standards
 - Decreasing monoculture
 - “Tidiness” points might take a hit
 - Accepting responsibility for your actions and acting responsibly toward your neighbors
 - Moving closer and closer to sustainability (decreasing need for new inputs)

Self-assess your goals. Be brutally honest with yourself

- Values
- Budget
- Time
- Other resources

- Start small
 - Space—front yard, left of driveway
 - Species—dandelions wherever they may be
 - Time—through June
 - Practice—organic seed
 - Chemical—no neonics this year
- Make it a habit
 - Set a schedule
 - Involve family or neighbors or friends
 - But it's ok to take a vacation
- Know when to hold'em, know when to fold'em
 - Don't let seeds happen
 - Don't hurt yourself

- Don't give the weed-board cause to come knocking
- Get educated
 - Weeds
 - Bugs
 - Pruning
 - Soils
- Useful things that are harder, or at least require more discipline
 - Take notes
 - Develop strategies
 - Increase complexity of ecosystem
 - Birdfeeders
 - Chickens
 - More plant species
- Continually reassess
 - Did I bite off too much?
 - Can I add more?
 - What don't I know?

