

saving_our_streams_04

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

garden, eat, o'rourke, natural, allergies, pesticides, maintain, mosquitoes, mow, herbicide, food, fertilizers, saves, compost, insect, fish, de hoy, organic garden, houston, garlic onions

SPEAKERS

Terry O'Rourke, Norm Uhl,

N Norm Uhl 00:06

Did you know that you can contribute to a fish kill by fertilizing your lawn? You can if you use too much, followed by a heavy rain or the overwatering of your lawn. Now fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides can be used safely, but only if you follow the directions. There is another alternative as you're about to see, and that's to garden nature's way.

& 00:29

[Bird sounds]

N Norm Uhl 00:41

This is a suburban backyard which is in harmony with nature. It's an organic garden.

T Terry O'Rourke 00:49

I was a failure at mowing early on. You mow your front yard because you want the neighborhood to look good. Your backyard you mow as little as possible in order to maintain the wild scape.

N Norm Uhl 01:00

The main reason he gardens this way is that it is good for the environment. He does not use fertilizers, pesticides or other chemicals because they wash off during rains and watering and end up in the area waterways where they can and do cause fish kills. But there are other reasons to garden this way. In Terry's case, his garden produces about 1/3 of his food year round. So it also saves him money.

T

Terry O'Rourke 01:27

You know you go to the grocery store and you buy lettuce and you put it in there and about half of it gets wasted. You know no matter what rate it is you buy too much or you buy too little. Well, here I just go pick it when I want to eat it. So I mean I had like zero waste. So the cost is just incredibly low. I just pick it whenever I want to eat it. Del jardín de hoy, the food of today from the garden.

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Norm Uhl 01:49

So what do we have here?

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Terry O'Rourke 01:50

Your big leaf on the bottom is collards. This is parsley, and these are the garlic onions. And this is the flowering bok choy. And this is broccoli. Potatoes came from Idaho. I don't eat bread; I eat the greens from the garden. I roll the food just like tacos. So it's really kind of a taco salad.

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Norm Uhl 02:16

People in Houston ought to find this very natural. O'Rourke says healthier eating has also resulted in lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol. He says there are other health benefits as well.

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Terry O'Rourke 02:26

I have found like lots of people I've suffered from allergies, that eating the plants that are living in your own backyard somehow have some factor of reducing your allergy. I don't have allergies like I used to.

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Norm Uhl 02:39

Leftovers from our lunch go into the compost pile along with coffee grounds, leaves, and grass clippings. He uses the compost as a natural fertilizer for his garden.


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Terry O'Rourke 02:49

Composting is so easy and the only difficult part of it is that people somehow are put off by thinking that it's difficult.

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Norm Uhl 02:56



He also saves rainwater to use on his garden. And since he uses mainly native plants used to Houston's weather, he doesn't have to water as often. Insect problems like fire ants and aphids are handled with home remedies. And he also maintains two ponds for insect control.

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Terry O'Rourke 03:12

The mosquitoes lay their eggs in this water and the goldfish that you see, and the Gambusia, the mosquito eating minnows eat it just like caviar so you just don't get mosquitoes out of a pond like this with fish in it. I will have thousands, literally thousands of toads that will come out and go to all of the gardens around here. In my garden, it's the toads and the birds eat more insects than any kind of herbicide or pesticide that I would use.

N

Norm Uhl 03:38

There is one more benefit to natural gardening. Once the system is set up, O'Rourke says it takes less time to maintain, just a few minutes a day.