

Have you already broken your New Year's resolution? How about focusing on your garden this year instead? That will probably be a lot more fun.

Set an intention rather than a goal. An intention creates a path you follow and avoids the stress of having to meet a specific expectation. After all, gardening should be enjoyable.

Consider making your garden more environmentally friendly:

Reduce your water use. Install drip irrigation (it's really not that hard).

Improve your soil. Keep mulching!

How about planting some plants that will help reduce your energy consumption by shading your home or its south- and west-facing windows? Create habitat for wildlife. In addition to planting native plants and other plants to provide food for wildlife and pollinators, provide water and shelter. Leave your garden a little messy; it's better for wildlife.

Learn to make compost. It's the best way to recycle your yard waste and some food scraps.

Learn more about your garden:

Spend more time observing it. How does the light and shade change throughout the year? Where does the rainwater flow? How does the wind affect your garden? Which critters call it home?

Track the daily high and low temperature and the rainfall in your location. Keep a notebook or other journal to record what you observe.

Experiment with something new: new plants, new tools or new ways of taking care of your garden. Did you know that no-till gardens are the wave of the future?

Make your garden work better for you:

What are the big challenges in your garden, and what one action could you take to make the biggest dent in dealing with that challenge?

What can you do to make your garden more enjoyable? Do you need more seating? Or perhaps more shade or sun? Do you want to create a peaceful nook for meditation?

Simply spend a bit more time gardening. Fifteen minutes a day can have a big effect and will make for a relaxing break, no matter what time of day you go out.

Knowledge makes you a better and more confident gardener. Check out the Master Gardener website (<http://cecolusa.ucanr.edu/>) for useful information as well as upcoming workshops and events.

Or you could simply decide to spend more time in the garden. Fresh air and being in nature are wonderful for your heart and soul. Being more at peace is a wonderful intention for the new year.