

Sustainable Summer Activities

Megan Murtaugh

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Introduction

With the summer months in full swing, it is essential to remember the impacts our actions can have on the environment. Being more cautious with our summer activities can help improve the environment.

Exploring and participating in fun and sustainable activities is a great way to get involved with improving the environment.

Sustainable Beach Day

Having a beach day is one of the most popular summer activities people partake in. While soaking in the sun, it is possible to maintain sustainable habits to positively impact the beachy environment.

Using a **reef-safe sunscreen** not only protects your skin from the sun, but it is also better for the ocean if you decide to go swimming. Many sunscreens contain chemicals that have been connected to coral reef deterioration. Reef-safe sunscreen only contains mineral UV-blocking ingredients, including zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. For further information on reef-safe sunscreen, visit the [Save the Reef](#) website to find out if your sunscreen is safe for the reef.

Properly **disposing of waste** on the beach is essential. Trash left in the sand can end up in the ocean. Ensure that at the end of your beach day, all waste is thrown away either in trash/recycling cans located on the beach, or bring the waste back to wherever you are staying. Participating in **beach cleanups** in your community is a great way to get involved and keep your oceans clean.

Purchasing more **eco-friendly gear** for beach trips is a great way to promote sustainability. The following are sustainable alternatives to common beach supplies.

- Beach towels made from organic or recycled materials
- Biodegradable beach toys
- Reusable beach toys
- Natural fiber umbrellas

Planting a Garden

Growing your own fruits and vegetables is a fun and sustainable way to produce your own food. Below is a graphic showing when to plant different fruits and vegetables in the state of Delaware. To ensure gardens are grown and treated in a sustainable way, visit the [Missouri Botanical Garden](#) website to learn more about sustainable gardening.

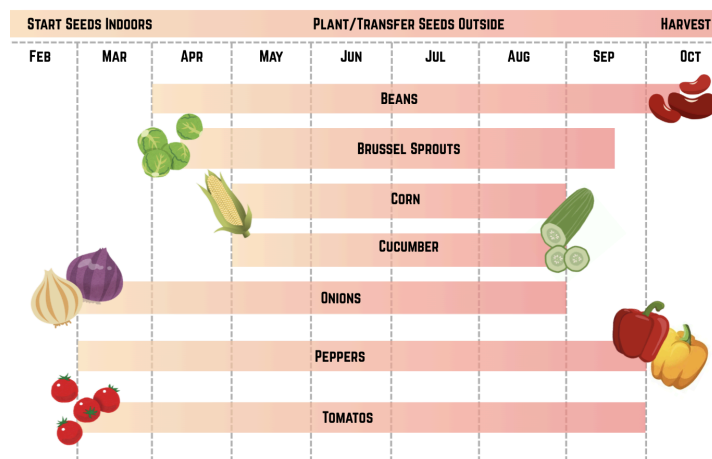


Figure 1. A graphic showing when to plant fruits and vegetables in Delaware

In addition to common fruit and vegetable gardens, planting a pollinator garden is another sustainable activity. Pollinators are declining due to pesticide use and loss of habitat. Selecting [species indigenous](#) to the state of Delaware will give you a better chance of producing a pollinator garden and attracting a diverse variety of insect pollinators. These plants can be planted in pots on a sunny porch or balcony, and

must be matched to the proper soil. DNREC has a great [guide](#) on how to begin your pollinator garden.

Composting

Composting waste is a sustainable and natural process that benefits the environment. The decomposition of organic matter, such as fruit or egg shells, occurs via soil microbes, or decomposers. These decomposers break down yard waste and food scraps, and recycle them into a material that serves as an excellent soil for your yard and garden.

The University of Delaware's Agriculture and Natural Resources page has a great [resource](#) for starting, and maintaining a yard waste compost. It discusses the different kinds of compost systems, and how to construct one. Some compostable yard waste includes leaves, weeds, and grass clippings.

Composting lunch scraps after a fun summer day reduces landfill waste and can produce nutrient-rich soil for gardening. Learning about the benefits and beginning to compost is a very environmentally friendly activity to pick up. The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control has a great [composting guide](#) if you want to learn more about how to get started composting.

Visiting Farmers' Markets

Visiting a local farmer's market is a great way to obtain food in a more sustainable manner. Farmers' markets help out local farmers and generally offer great prices. For more information on farmers' markets happening in Delaware, visit the [Delaware Department of Agriculture](#) page on the [Delaware.gov](#) website.

Volunteering

A great way to help out your community and practice sustainability is by volunteering. Whether it is at an animal shelter, an assisted living facility, or cleaning the beaches, volunteer work always has a positive impact on the environment and surrounding communities. To find volunteer opportunities in Delaware, visit the [Volunteer Delaware](#) website and find out how you can get involved.

About the Author

Megan Murtaugh, 2025 Extension Scholar, University of Delaware

Jennifer Volk (corresponding author), Associate Director, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, Dover, DE (jennvolk@udel.edu)

About this Publication

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