



## Tips for the construction and maintenance of your sidewalk garden

1. **Earth** Your new sidewalk garden is filled with a layer of topsoil about 18 centimetres deep. This is enough for annual and other shallow-rooted plants. If you want to plant bushes or climbing plants, it's a good idea to dig down deeper and add extra potting soil. Potting soil generally contains enough manure for around 6 weeks. Blooming plants need extra compost or manure in the spring in order to thrive.
2. **Sun or partial shade?** Is your sidewalk garden on the sunny (more than 6 hours per day) or shady (between 3 and 6 hours per day) side of the street? Make sure to take this into account when choosing plants. A plant that is well chosen and placed saves on maintenance, as well as on disappointment.
3. **Water** Water your plants regularly in the first weeks (preferably before the sun rises or after it sets). This will stimulate the roots to grow. In dry periods, giving water every second day is a good guideline. Because a sidewalk garden lies close to the house, it receives less rainwater than a free-standing garden. If your sidewalk garden is located underneath a bay window or a balcony, it's essential to water regularly. It's better to give plenty of water a couple of times per week than a little every day. A simple test to see if watering is needed: stick your finger all the way into the soil, and if it comes out clean then it's time to water. In general, established plants and deep-rooted plants need much less water.
4. **Compost** Given that the initial soil contains only a small amount of food, it is recommended that you add an extra layer of compost in the spring and in the fall. It is also advised that you fertilise blooming plants every six weeks. Nutrients are quickly used up or washed away in these small plots of land.
5. **Maintenance** A handy overview of what garden tasks need to be done, and at what point during the year, can be found in nearly all garden books, magazines or websites. Natuur&Milieuteam Zuid also organises workshops where you can learn to plan your garden, sow and prune. These events are announced in the [agenda](#) (in Dutch) on our website, or you can subscribe to our monthly digital newsletter (in Dutch), for a wider selection of activities.
6. **Groen Gemaal** The 'Groen Gemaal' project, which is based in the little house in the Sarphati Park, is a focal point for local people with sidewalk gardens. It is run by the staff of the local community centre in the Pijp and volunteers from the neighbourhood. You can come here to exchange plants and seeds, borrow tools, or ask for pruning advice. The plants and seeds are donated by people

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with extra to share. Senior citizens and handicapped people can come to the Groen Gemaal to request help in binding up or pruning plants in their sidewalk gardens. The Groen Gemaal is usually open Tuesday through Friday from 13.00-17.00, and can be reached at (020) 664 1350.

7. **Take part in the Bee Ribbon** Your sidewalk garden can help to support the bees if you choose pollen and nectar-rich plants. Although hybrid plants may look beautiful, they produce little or no food for bees, butterflies, and other nectar and pollen lovers. The 'Bee Ribbon' consists of all of the pollinator-friendly gardens running through the city. In addition to the honeybee, there are around 300 varieties of wild bees in the Netherlands. All of them are crucial for our food supply due to the role they play in vegetable and fruit production.

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