

Your Garden – Neighbor's Envy, Owner's Pride!

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# YOUR GARDEN NEIGHBOR'S ENVY, OWNER'S PRIDE! SELECTED TIPS - 57 PAGES!



57 Pages!

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## All You Need To Know On Indoor Gardening

Summer is over and the garden outside is finished for the year. All the plants outside have either gone dormant for the winter or finished their life cycle. But gardeners who still crave the satisfaction and rewards of growing things can put their gardening talents to work indoors during the winter.

Whether your gardening need itches during the winter or not, having plants in the house can add to the overall health of your household. Having one plant for every 100 square feet in your house helps remove indoor pollutants. In addition, plants take up carbon dioxide and give off oxygen as a waste product. Humans, of course, take up oxygen and give off carbon dioxide as a waste product. So, having plants in the house makes for a healthy and equitable exchange for humans and plants.

A fancy greenhouse is not necessary to grow vegetables and beautiful flowers indoors. Many plants can thrive in your house and there are several techniques to help you keep your green thumb working all winter long.

## Lighting

One of the first things you will need to address for your indoor gardening is lighting. No matter what else you do for your plants, if they do not have the proper lighting they will not thrive. Lighting is, in fact, the most important aspect of indoor gardening. When choosing decorative plants for your home, look for plants that require medium to low light, like Philodendrons, some ivy and some ferns.

### **Plants and indoor light**

Plants that are not getting enough sunlight will generally have thin stems and smaller leaves. The leaves will also be lighter on a plant that is not getting adequate light.

Most plants with medium light requirements will benefit from a south facing window. Windows that face east and west will generally give plants with medium light requirements adequate sunlight, as well. However, plants that prefer low light will probably prefer a north facing window.

Because the sunlight comes through your windows from one side only, even when placing your plants near windows with the proper amount of sunlight you will still need to make sure that all sides of the plant get the full benefits of the light. The foliage on the side of the plant that is facing away from the window will reach for the light, growing up and over toward the window and making your plants look uneven. The foliage on the side of the plant facing away from the window may even be a lighter color. Each week, rotate your plant so that a different side of the plant is facing the window. This will allow all the foliage on the plant to grow evenly and healthy.

If the windows in your home do not let much light into the house, if they are shaded by trees or buildings or if the angle from the sun just does not allow much light into the room, you can use artificial light for your plants. Most hardware stores and some supermarkets carry incandescent grow lights that will screw into a regular socket and will provide your plants with supplemental light when there is some, but not enough, sunlight. There are also a variety of specialty grow lights that will also provide the necessary light for growing vegetables inside and for starting spring seedlings inside.

### **Specialty grow lights**

- One type of specialty grow light is an HID (High Intensity Discharge) light. HID lights come in two types; the Metal Halide (MH) bulb, which produces lighting in the blue spectrum and is ideal for foliage growth and, High Pressure Sodium (HPS) bulbs, which give a red-orange light, ideal for increasing bud and flower production. The MH bulbs can be used as a primary or single lighting source while the HPS bulbs are best used as a secondary or additional lighting source. MH and HPS bulbs can be used together to give your indoor plants the full spectrum of light.
- Compact fluorescent full-spectrum lights are now available that, especially when used in multiples, can provide some plants, such as African violets and herbs, with all the light they need.

Most hardware stores will carry a wide variety of specialty grow lights and they can also be found online by searching for grow lights.

### **Reflectors**

Reflectors can be an effective way of maximizing the use of electric grow lights. Place reflective Mylar or white paper around the edge of the containers to reflect the light back up onto the plant. Aluminum foil will also reflect heat back up onto the plants and should not be used as a reflector.

Using an electric timer on your grow lights will keep your plant’s day and night cycles regulated. Plants do need a night cycle for rest in order to grow properly.

When using banks of artificial lighting for your indoor plants, care must be taken to provide adequate ventilation. The heat from multiple electric bulbs can build up and be detrimental to the plants. Leave a window cracked for several hours a day, if possible, or run a ceiling fan or portable fan to circulate the air.

## **Watering**

Proper watering of your indoor plants is as important as proper lighting. More indoor plants are killed by over-watering than by any other cause, so it is important to know the water requirements of each plant that you have indoors. It is also important to note that plants that are grown indoors in containers will require more frequent watering than plants grown outside in the ground because the containers restrict the growth of the root system. Electric lighting also creates a drying effect that creates a need for more frequent watering.

### **Types of water**

Indoor plants can be watered with regular tap water. The chlorine and fluoride that is added to most city water will not harm your house plants. However, do not water your plants with water that has been run through a water softener, especially a water softener that uses salt. If you do buy bottled water for your plants, buy regular spring water or drinking water, not distilled water. Distilled water has had all the minerals removed and your plants do need the minerals that are naturally found in drinking water. Use water that is the same temperature as the room the plant is in. Using water that is too cold or too hot can shock your plant's root system.

The humidity in the room is also an important factor to consider in your plant's water needs. If the room air is very dry, consider using a humidifier. Air that is too dry for too long can cause the leaves of the plant to dry and curl at the edges. You can also mist the plants leaves, depending on the plant, if the air in the room is too dry. Mist the leaves early in the day to prevent them from rotting overnight.

### **When To Water**

Not all plants have the same water requirements. Tropical plants may require more water than Mediterranean plants and flowering plants will require more water than plants that do not flower. Carefully read the watering instructions for all the plants or seeds that you purchase.

Along these same lines, not all of your plants will need watering at the same time. The size of each plant, the amount of light and ventilation each plant gets, the temperature and humidity of the room all have an effect on how much water a plant needs. Watering all of your indoor plants

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at the same time each week is not a good practice. Instead, learn to tell when your plants need water by the feel and color of the soil. As the soil dries out it will become a lighter color and will eventually begin to pull away from the sides of the container and even crack. A good way to check the moisture content of the soil is to stick your finger into the soil one or two inches deep. If the soil at the bottom of the hole is dry, your plant needs water.

Do not water your plants until the soil is dry enough that the plant actually needs water. When the soil is too wet the plant can not get enough oxygen and will literally drown. The roots will turn brown and will rot or will be subject to disease and the leaves will turn yellow and will fall off.

While it is better to let a plant get a little too dry than to over-water it, letting a plant stay too dry can also kill the roots. If you are away from home often or find it difficult to gauge when your plants need water, you can invest in self-watering planters that will constantly give your plants the proper amount of water.

Do not water your indoor plants at night. Transpiration, the process where water vapor passes through the leaves of the plant, is an important part of the watering process and can not occur at night in indoor plants.

Do not automatically assume that the plant needs watering if it appears stressed. Carefully check the soil’s moisture by sticking your finger as far down into the dirt as possible before you water a plant that appears stressed.

### **How To Water**

There are two methods you can use to water your plants. One method is to water your plants from the top of the soil. When watering from the top of the soil, use a watering can with a narrow spout that will fit between the leaves to prevent splashing too much water on the foliage. Water all over the top of the soil, not just in the middle or the sides.

You can also water your plants from the bottom. For some plants that do not tolerate moisture on their leaves, such as African violets, this is the best method. This method is also preferred for most plants because it allows the water to soak up through the entire soil base. Many plant

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containers have large saucers that go underneath the pot. Fill this saucer with water and allow the soil to soak up the water through the drainage holes. Allow the water to stand for one hour and then drain off any remaining water. Do not allow the remaining water to stay in the saucer. This will result in over-watering and prevent the roots from receiving the oxygen they need.

If your container does not have a saucer, fill a sink or large bucket partially with water and place the plant container in the sink or bucket. Make sure that the water does not flow over the top of the container. Let the plant sit in the water until the top of the soil is moist.

Plants that are consistently watered from the bottom may eventually show signs of salt build-up on the top of the soil. If this salt build-up is moderate, water the plant from the top of the soil thoroughly and discard the water that drains out of the soil. If the salt build-up is heavy, scrape off the top layer of the soil, taking care not to disturb the roots, and replace it with fresh soil.



## Fertilizing

Most indoor plants will not require frequent fertilizing. A good application of fertilizer every two to three months should be sufficient for most indoor plants. Do not fertilize new plants for at least two months because they will have already been fertilized at the nursery. Carefully read the printed instructions that come with your plant or research on your own to make sure you know the fertilizing needs of each particular plant.

There are many good commercial fertilizers on the market made specifically for house plants. Carefully follow the label directions when fertilizing your plants and you will avoid over and under feeding your indoor plants.

Plants that have been over fertilized will have dried or burned leaves. If you feel you have over fertilized your plants, water them thoroughly from the top and discard the drained water for two to three weeks.

## Room Temperature

Not all plants have the same temperature requirements. Carefully read the instructions that come with your plant for any specific temperature requirements. As a general rule, most house plants do well in day time temperatures of 65° F to 75° F and 50° F to 60° F night time temperatures. These temperatures can vary as much as plus or minus 10 degrees for most plants. Plants with different temperature requirements will generally have that noted prominently in the printed planting instructions that come with the plant.

Major temperature fluctuations are harmful to indoor plants. Try to keep the temperature as stable as possible in the rooms where your indoor plants live.

The leaves will turn yellow and fall off on plants that are grown in temperatures that are too cold. A plant that is grown in temperatures that are too hot will be small and will have weak stems and leaves.

## Choosing The Right Container

### **Size**

It is important to choose a container that will give your indoor plants plenty of room to grow and small enough that the plant will not put all its energy into expanding its root system to fill the available space. For example, when transplanting a four inch potted plant into a new pot, the new pot should be no more than two to four inches larger. When transplanting a twelve inch potted plant, the new pot should be no more than four to six inches larger. When you grow your indoor plants from very young plants, you may need to transplant three or four times before the plant reaches its mature size.

### **Drainage**

All plant containers should contain drainage holes in the bottom of the pot. Plants that are not allowed proper drainage will suffer from oxygen deprivation and the diseases that can affect roots when they are kept too wet. Clay and pottery pots are excellent containers for indoor plants because the pots absorb some moisture; however plastic containers also work very well. Whatever material the container is made from, it must have proper drainage holes in the bottom of the pot. If the container you have chosen does not have drainage holes, drill or cut several holes about the size of a pencil into the bottom of the pot to allow excess water to drain. Space the drainage holes evenly all around the bottom of the pot to allow for even drainage.

It is best to purchase a large saucer with your plant pot. This will allow you to water your plants from the bottom, if you choose, and will also keep freshly watered plants from dripping on to furniture and floors.

## **Potting And Repotting**

The first step in repotting indoor plants is to make sure the new containers are clean and free of insects and disease. Even if the containers have never been used before, it is a good practice to wash them well with regular dishwashing liquid and a couple of teaspoons of bleach. Rinse the pots thoroughly with clear water until all traces of the bleach smell are gone.

Use a good commercial potting soil. Garden soil is not suitable for indoor plants although you can mix in up to one-half pure compost with the potting soil. There are also commercial potting soils now that contain timed release fertilizers which are excellent for use in repotting indoor plants.

The soil should be dark and moist with no clumps or rocks. If necessary, put the soil through a sieve to break up hard lumps and sift out any rocks or debris. If the soil is dry, place the soil in a bucket or pan and water it lightly, mixing the soil around in the bucket or pan to get it all moistened. Let this moistened soil stand for an hour or two to make sure the moisture is evenly distributed. If you add too much water, just let the soil dry for a day or two before potting your plants.

### **Transplanting**

With the moist, sifted soil, fill the pot about one-third with soil. Grasp the plant by its stem and gently slide it out of its existing pot, dirt and all. Then place the plant, with the dirt, into the new pot, pressing it down lightly.

The plant’s existing dirt and root ball should come up to about one inch below the rim of the pot. This will allow you to water from the top of the pot occasionally or consistently, if you desire. The plant’s stem should not be covered with dirt or it will rot and the plant will die.

If the plant sits too low in the pot, take it out and add more dirt to the bottom of the pot until the plant’s root ball and existing dirt sits about one inch from the rim of the pot.

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Carefully fill in soil around the plant to about one inch below the rim of the pot, making sure to keep the existing dirt and root ball level with the new dirt in the pot. Press the soil firmly but gently down as you fill the pot to prevent air bubbles and excess settling.

Water carefully from the top, making sure that the water doesn’t sit on top of the soil.

When your indoor plant has become root bound it will stop growing. Grasp the plant by the stem and slide it from the pot, dirt and all. If the roots are tightly packed and covering the outside of the dirt and growing out through the drainage holes, the plant is root bound and the roots will need trimmed before you repot it.

With a sharp pair of scissors or pruners, cut away about half of the tightly packed roots. Then loosen the remaining roots on the outside of the dirt so that they will grow down into the soil of the new pot and repot normally.

### **Planting Cuttings**

When you have taken cuttings from other plants and rooted them in water there comes a time when they need to be transferred from the water to soil.

Fill the new container about one third full of the potting soil and place the cutting inside the pot, holding it so that the bottom of the roots drag slightly onto the soil. If the stem of the cutting does not come to about one inch from the rim of the pot, add more soil until it does. Then carefully fill the pot with soil, holding the cutting straight and lightly packing the soil around it up to about one inch from the top of the pot.

Water carefully from the top, making sure that the water does not stand on top of the soil.

## Growing An Indoor Herb Garden

Growing herbs indoors is simple and enjoyable. Simply select a spot in your home with ample sunlight or prepare artificial lights to either supplement or fully provide the light your herbs will need. Compact fluorescent lights can supply all the light your herbs need if used within two feet of the plants. Depending on the number of plants you plan to grow, you may need more than one light.

Choose a container that will provide ample room for the mature plants and that will give your herbs proper drainage. A 16 inch rectangular pot will have enough room for about four herb plants.

You can start your herbs from seeds in the same pots where you plan to grow them or you can start them in seedling pots. You can also buy established herb plants at local gardening centers. One note: herbs are very sensitive when it comes to transplanting. It is probably best for beginning gardeners to start the seeds in the pots where the mature plants will remain.

Some of the easiest herbs to grow are rosemary, oregano, chives, basil, cilantro and parsley. However, most herbs are easy and forgiving plants and should prove no problem to the dedicated indoor gardener.

Plant your herbs as you would any other plant and water as needed. Many herbs, such as rosemary and oregano, are Mediterranean plants and prefer a drier soil. To test to see if your herbs need water, poke your finger into the soil around the plants as far as it will go. If the soil at the bottom of the hole is dry, your herbs need water. Watch your herbs carefully for signs of drying. If the leaves begin to look wilted or become too dry, then you are not giving your herbs enough water.

Herbs need very little fertilizer. Use a fertilizer formulated for house plants and follow the label directions carefully, applying the fertilizer only once every two or three months.

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Fresh herbs are a delightful addition to any kitchen. They give off a fresh scent and add great flavor to your cooking. And they are so simple to grow and maintain that anyone can have an indoor herb garden.

## Some Common House Plants Can Be Poisonous

When decorating with indoor plants, it is a good idea to know which plants can be harmful to pets and children. The following is a list of common house plants that should be kept out of reach of pets and children who might be prone to chewing or putting the leaves in their mouths.

- **Philodendron**

The Philodendron is an ivy-type plant with heart-shaped leaves and is one of the most popular house plants. Eating or chewing this plant will cause a burning sensation in the lips, mouth and throat and may cause a rash. Rinse the child's mouth thoroughly with clear water. A large amount must be eaten to cause a severe reaction however it is a good idea to call poison control if your child does ingest the leaves.

- **Pothos**

Pothos is another very popular house plant. It is a large ivy-type plant with heart-shaped leaves that are streaked with yellow or white. Eating or chewing this plant may cause a burning sensation in the lips, mouth and throat and may cause a rash. Rinse the child's mouth thoroughly with clear water. It does require a large amount to cause a severe reaction but it is a good idea to call poison control if your child does ingest the leaves.

- **Dieffenbachia or Dumb Cane**

This is a large plant with large, oblong leaves that have white splotches. Eating or chewing this plant may cause a burning sensation in the lips, mouth and throat, a rash and it may also cause temporary speech impairment. Wash the child's mouth with clear water and call poison control.

- **Azalea or Rhododendron**

This is a flowering shrub that comes in a variety of colors. This is a dangerous plant and should be kept away from children and pets. This plant may cause burning in the mouth, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, skin prickling, dimness of vision, muscular weakness, a slow heart beat, abnormally low blood pressure, convulsions and coma. This plant may cause death. If your child ingests any of this plant call poison control immediately.



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- **Oleander**

This is a flowering shrub with white, pink or red flower clusters, with long narrow leaves up to 10 inches long. This plant is very toxic and should be kept away from children and pets. This plant may cause death. If your child ingests any of this plant call poison control immediately.

## Sources Of Information For Organic Gardeners

New to Organic Gardening? Just starting out and don't know where to start? Need a question answered immediately? There are several places that you can turn to for correct and concise information. Organic Gardening is a simple form of gardening. However, one needs to know where to start from, or it can become a horribly unpleasant experience. So get your information from a reliable source.

The quickest and easiest of these is of course the Internet. It's ensured that you are a click away from any query that you might have. It'll draw up results in a matter of seconds. You need not wait at all. If you require a hard copy then you can always print out the pages. The Internet draws up searches from around the globe and various sources which won't be available in any library. It basically offers more options than all other sources put together. But of course, the entire process of logging into the computer and the Internet and searching through thousands of results will get very tedious when one is in a hurry.

Another good option is the store where you usually get your supplies from. Any standard store will have their share of books and pamphlets at the least. They are a good source of quick information. When in a hurry you can always call up a more experienced gardener or the owner of the store. However, individual opinion can be tinged with various personal quirks, prejudices and the like. Hence, make sure of the information is reliable and trustworthy. If the person is, then however, you can benefit from experience, which is the best teacher of them all.

Another possible option would be any library. Before getting your membership make sure the library is well stocked. It's not worth the trouble if you can't get substantial use out of it. But a well stocked library is more useful than the internet. A book well read will give you all the information you need and help you remember it for a lifetime. However, the use of the library is only efficient when you have enough time to spare. Also, if it's a standard book that you seek, then it's best to buy it, for it will always be handy. A few pages can always be photocopied.

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Self-help books on Organic gardening, a trustworthy store, a well stocked library, a honed gardener and the infinite Internet are all fabulous sources of information. So what are you waiting for? Take your pick and get started today.

## Herbs At You Beck And Call..! The Revolution That Is Indoor Herb Container Gardening

An unexpected arrival of guests? There is nothing at home but a bit of olive oil and some vegetables. You have that old recipe which you can toss up for a brilliant meal of pan fried veggies. But what about fresh basil? Darn! That one ingredient that makes all the difference. What do you do?

It's Thanksgiving. You have planned a brilliant Turkey dinner. You picked up all the requirements from the Supermarket on your way home from work, but just as you are halfway through, you realize that the fresh mixture of herbs that makes your Turkey so special is missing! What do you do?

Run to the market? And keep your guests waiting?? Or send someone else... and let the dish grow cold?? A simple solution to a complex problem. Start gardening!

No, you need not march out to the backyard with your shovel over your shoulder! Do it Indoors! No, I'm not talking messy potted plants. Just get a container. And grow your very own fresh herbs anywhere in the house.

Herbs, those magical ingredients... the aroma can drive anyone wild! Wars have been fought over the... their healing qualities have been debated over... and one just can't deny the zing they add to any dish! So grow them at home. Fresh is always so much better than the dried counterpart. And much cheaper than the fresh herbs available in the market.

And just in case you were wondering, the process of maintenance of these plants is not difficult at all. A few tips would be to use loose soil. Compact soil makes it hard for them to spread their delicate roots. Use some bark chips or stones at the bottom of the container. Herbs like aeration and respond well to this method.

Just pick a plant and a container (a pretty one.. just imagine a white ceramic with a tuft of sweet smelling lavender on your bedroom windowsill.. its smell will assure you unhindered peaceful sleep!). Add the chips or stones at the bottom, and a bit of soil. Place your herb,

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and fill in the rest of the soil. Make sure your herbs get ten to twelve hours of daylight. This can be achieved easily by placing them on window sills. This does increase the risk of insects, but don't add pesticides if you don't want to eat them. A grow light is a very good alternative to direct sunlight. As for fertilizers, these small plants don't need much. Of course, some homemade fertilizers would aid their growth. No, I don't mean manure! Anything from used tea leaves to broken egg shells in small quantities would do the trick. You can run a search for natural homemade fertilizers on the Internet. But I repeat that they aren't really necessary. Keep your plants aired, watered and in the sun, and it'll blossom into your personal herb garden.

Those brilliant flavors will never be missing from your dishes again. It'll be a feast all year round!

## Vegetable Gardening For Beginners

Growing your own vegetables is a rewarding activity. Not only does it give you the joy of working outside with the earth, it provides many nutritious meals for your family. Here is a little advice to get you started and to make your vegetable garden both easier and more productive.

The first step in having a successful vegetable garden is preparing the soil for seed planting. Well-prepared soil makes it easier for seeds to germinate and for seedlings to thrive. Your vegetable garden should be well-drained, and soil preparation should be deep, using plenty of rich organic matter like compost to help it retain moisture.

It's a good idea to check the soil for pH or acidity. Vegetables usually need more alkaline soils. You can either submit your soil for testing at a laboratory, giving you very detailed results, or you can purchase an inexpensive soil tester at the local nursery or hardware store.

The soil should be relatively dry before you begin working or plowing your vegetable garden plot. Make sure your plot has easy access to water and locate it where you can get both full sun and partial shade to encourage different vegetable garden species. Most productive vegetable gardens need at least an inch of water, whether it comes from above in rain or from the tap, every week during the growing season. You can add a simple irrigation system with perforated piping to assure your vegetable garden gets the moisture it needs for thriving vegetable plants.

Before you get started, be sure to learn all you can about vegetable seeds and about the specific vegetables you want to harvest later on. Look for information on vulnerability to insects and fungus, germination requirements, needs for the timing and amount of light, and general plant hardiness. Be aware of what planting zone you're working in. This will help you decide what types of plants to raise and when to plant and harvest.

To assure abundance, plant more seeds than you want in vegetable plants, as some of your seeds won't germinate. Keep your vegetable garden moist (not muddy) until your seedlings

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show their second set of leaves. Continue to thin out the vegetable garden rows throughout the growing season so that the most hardy plants are highly productive. Test the soil regularly to assure it contains enough nutrients to feed all your healthy vegetable plants and use natural fertilizers for healthy plants.

If you decide to use manure, be sure that you know which plants are more sensitive. Manure can burn and damage vulnerable vegetable plants. If you have the time and space, making your own compost is a wonderful way to provide natural organic fertilizer, and it cuts down on the amount of garbage you contribute to the local landfill.

Healthy soil and plants are the best insurance against harmful insects and pests. This means using natural compost, watering regularly, and providing good drainage. You can also plant a border of marigolds around your vegetable garden to prevent aphid infestations.

A critical part of successful vegetable gardening is keeping your garden free of weeds. They steal water, light, and nutrients from your vegetable plants. Be sure to hoe your vegetable garden and cultivate the soil frequently, especially after it rains or you water your vegetable plants. Weeds are much easier to remove when the soil is loose and moist. Be careful, though, not to damage your vegetable plants when you pull weeds that are close to the stems or roots. Covering the soil between your vegetable garden rows with a light layer of pine needles mixed with cut grass will discourage weeds, as will laying wet newspaper between the rows.

These are only a few tips for having a productive vegetable garden. But this basic advice will take you a long way toward a healthy family diet throughout the growing season.

## The Many Rewards Of Vegetable Gardening

Many people enjoy gardening. It gets you outdoors, lets you commune with nature, give you time to think things through, and gives you a chance to create something beautiful. Gardening flowers is fun, but vegetable gardening has special rewards beyond fragrant flowers. You and your family can eat your harvest of vegetables.

Juicy ripe tomatoes, crisp snap beans, crisp green lettuce, and fresh squash are just a sample of the many food products that you can take straight to your table from your vegetable garden. Just rinse and serve. What better fast food could you want? You can also select your vegetables at their peak. No sifting through under- and over-ripe tomatoes at the grocery store. No questions about whether chemical pesticides or additives hide on and in your supposedly healthy vegetables. That means you know your family is getting healthy, nutritious food when you serve the "fruits" of your vegetable gardening.

Like other types of gardening and yard work, vegetable gardening gets you some good exercise and healthy living. You're out in the fresh air, not trapped inside a dark stale room in your house. Vegetable gardening assures you get plenty of sunshine and the vitamin D you need to have healthy skin and bones. Not only that, but vegetable gardening is an excellent and effective way to work off the stress of modern life. No hassling with traffic or shopping mall crowds.

Vegetable gardening is a wonderful family activity, too. Preparing the bed, cultivating the soil, thinning seedlings and weeds, and harvesting ripe vegetables bring your family together with a sense of true accomplishment. Everyone at the table can be proud when your family sits down to an abundant table of home-grown vegetables they've all worked to produce. Not only that, your family can earn the friendship and gratitude of neighbors when your family shares the harvest.

The rewards of vegetable gardening last well after you've harvested the last winter crop. You can make a family game of freezing, canning, and preserving your vegetable harvest. That way, you'll enjoy the rewards of vegetable gardening throughout the year. You'll bring some of that summer sun to your table in the dead of a gloomy winter.



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You'll also save a pretty penny when you replace those expensive frozen vegetables with your own. And you can create your own custom preserving recipes for unique, delicious dishes.

You don't have to own an acre of land for productive vegetable gardening. Any small plot of ground can provide abundant healthy vegetables. Vegetable gardening in containers, window boxes, even indoors, is a worthy pursuit as long as you have the proper soil, sun, and water. You can even extend your growing season indoors with artificial sunlight and warmth.

Give it a try. Buy some seeds, start a test plot indoors or out, and begin to enjoy the rewards of vegetable gardening for you and your family. Before you know it, you'll be placing a steaming bowl of fresh squash, a beautiful salad, or a big plate of condiments - the greatest rewards of home vegetable gardening.

## Classical Gardening Landscape Fundamentals - A Place For Peace

Everyone has a different idea about the best approach to garden landscaping. Canadians and North Americans may consider colonial layout the "classical" gardening landscape. Old-world types may prefer the use of Greco-Roman styles and statuary as the centerpiece in their gardening landscape. Others will consider the charm and elegance from the well-known gardens in Tuscany to be the standard classical gardening landscape.

Even with largely differing opinions, and they are just opinions, few gardeners argue against the traditional formal rose garden as The Classical gardening landscape. Kings and queens of old Europe, and their aristocratic hangers-on, much preferred the formal rose garden for their romantic dalliances and high teas. The rose garden has long been a favorite spot for relaxing, entertaining, and soaking up the sensual fragrances of this most popular flower.

A truly classic formal rose garden should be completely symmetrical, each side mirroring the other, with plenty of lawn areas separating the well laid-out beds. Garden beds should follow classic lines and curves, even creating an image or design. Surrounding the garden with neatly trimmed evergreen hedges is a wonderful way to frame the classic rose gardening landscape. A bluestone patio adorns one end of the rose garden, balanced by a reflecting pool set within more bluestone at the opposite end. Evenly-spaced stepping stones or an elegant stone path connects the two ends and provides a way for visitors to enjoy the garden without trampling the neatly trimmed lawn.

For many gardening landscape enthusiasts, the classic sundial is the perfect centerpiece or focal point to the garden, although an elegant fountain or birdbath might also add the desired effect. Your focal point should be circled by a small hedge and stepping stones or stony path so that visitors can take their time and enjoy this point of interest as they take in the wonderful sights and fragrances surrounding them.

Other smaller pathways radiate out from the focal point to lawn areas with benches and lawn chairs or trellises and pergolas providing support for lovely flowering vines and shade for lingering to read or meditate in this peaceful environment. These additions are placed so

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that stone paths or stepping stones form a large cross that divides the garden into even quarters. Benches aside the reflecting pool are accompanied by rose planters, and more planters of roses lend decoration to the patio at the other end. The patio is framed by trellises and flowering vines on either side.

On the sides of the classic garden are three oval-trimmed trees, complimented at their base by beds of blooming flowers. In the early spring, these flowers add color to the garden while the young roses blossom. In the fall, the blooms compliment the fading roses and maintain interest in the classic gardening landscape. Evergreens line the back of the classical gardening landscape, and each corner is highlighted by a neatly-trimmed evergreen to give visual balance.

The classical gardening landscape's hallmark is its sense of order, peace, and comfort. Accented by cobbled paths, its lines are strong and symmetrical, their impact softened by the delicate rose blooms and vine overhead arbors. You'll find many examples of classical gardening landscape at historic locations like the Biltmore in North Carolina or other Vanderbilt estates in New York and New Jersey. Hartford, Connecticut, boasts a world-famous rose garden at Elizabeth Park. Of course, America's White House hosts a world-famous rose garden as well. Fort Worth's Botanic Garden in Texas is proud of its lower and oval rose gardens, exhibiting all the elements of classic gardening landscape.

European rose gardens display true classic gardening landscape. Castle Howard and Mottisfont Abbey in England are well worth the time if you're visiting Great Britain. The Roseraie de Bagatelle in Paris houses over 9000 plants of over 1000 varieties. The Roseraie de la Cour de Commer in Normandy, France, contains over 40 unique roses that exist nowhere else in the world. The Roseto Botanico di Cavriglia "Carla Fineschi" near the town of Cavriglia in Tuscany, Italy, contains representatives of each of the subgenera, sections, and classes of the genus Rosa.

If you've never visited a classic garden landscape, you owe yourself the treat. You'll enjoy hours of serene peace and sensual pleasure amid even elegant lines, under fragrant arbors, and beside quiet pools and bubbling fountains. Whether you're there to soak in the ambiance, devoting your attention to nature's glory, or to surround yourself with an

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environment that supports quiet meditation, you'll never forget the joy of classic gardening landscape.

## **How To Find Discount Gardening Supplies**

Gardeners follow their passion, and gardening is a very rewarding pursuit. But gardening supplies like pots, seeds, tools, and equipment can put a big dent in any gardener's budget. When you want to add a new garden to your yard or lot but don't have the right equipment to realize that dream, knowing where to find gardening supplies at a discount can mean the pot at the end of the rainbow!

Finding discount gardening supplies - there's the rub. Especially during the growing season, discounts may not even seem to be available to the avid gardener. You can find these discounts, but you have to plan ahead and know what you're doing to find them.

### **What's the best time to find discount gardening supplies?**

Without a doubt, the best time to find discount gardening supplies is after the growing season has ended. Home and garden stores will be eager for you to buy their plants, tools, and supplies at a discount so that they can make room for the next season's merchandise. One good way to add to your garden is to buy perennials near the end of the season. You'll still have enough time for them to develop roots before winter, and they'll come back soon the following spring with lots of healthy blossoms and fruits. When you want to get those discounts, don't think about what you'll see growing this year. Discount gardening supplies help you think ahead to the next growing season and save you a bundle!

### **Where can I find discount gardening supplies?**

Retail home and garden stores, hardware stores, and nurseries in the area are one source of discount gardening supplies. But online retailers will also be cutting their prices at the end of the growing season to avoid costly inventory build-up. Shopping online lets you find tools, decorations, and supplies at tremendous savings for use next year. Not only can you save money on the products, you can save your own valuable travel time and the cost of gasoline by shopping for discount gardening supplies online.

### **Can I find In-Season Discounts?**

Local nurseries may offer discounts when they've ordered large stocks of plants for big customers who don't follow through. Or they may simply offer discounts for plants they've grown in large quantities to supply their outlets. Call around to find local nurseries' and plant suppliers' best deals. You can also find good discounts on specific types of plants and supplies by focusing on the areas where they're abundant in the first place. For example, you may be able to get tropical plants at a discount by shopping at Florida outlets, either in person while you're on vacation or online. Arizona nurseries may offer really good deals on cactus, yucca, and other succulents. You may get firs at a top value by visiting nurseries and growers in the Northwest.

### **What about Joining a Garden Club?**

Becoming a member of your local garden club may be a rich source of discount and even free plants and garden supplies. First, club members are likely to have personal knowledge about where to get the best deals and discount gardening supplies. They may even organize shopping trips you can join to take advantage of the best sales.

### **Are Discount Warehouses and Stores a Good Idea?**

While some wholesalers and discount retailers may be trying to unload unhealthy plants or faulty supplies through their outlets, you may be able to find some great discount gardening supplies through them. Stores that charge a membership fee are more likely to have quality products, and how much you shop will eventually determine how much you save.

When you're planning a new garden, it's a comfort to know you can find the discount gardening supplies you need. By planning well ahead and identifying the most likely times and locations to find discount gardening supplies, your efforts will not only be fun and productive, they'll be affordable!

## **Keeping Your Garden Green**

Most gardeners work hard to maintain attractive colorful gardens throughout the summer, but many of us forget to do what's necessary to maintain that beauty into the fall and winter. Here is some advice that will help you prolong the life and looks of your garden by taking just a few extra steps during the summer.

Let's face it, every season, your garden will begin to wilt and fade. But you don't have to give in to the coming winter. You can keep your garden fresh and green longer than you might think.

At the first sign of that yellowish brown tone, take action. Pinch back the yellowing foliage and wilting flowers as quickly as you notice them. This will have instant results, as this action will immediately restore your green garden's freshness. Removing the dying parts of your plants will direct nutrients to the remaining healthy portions and add to the plant's life. Give your garden a little more water in the late summer and early fall to compensate for depleted nutrients and lower humidity.

In August, you should probably add a light dose of locally-produced fertilizer to boost your green garden just a bit. Locally-produced fertilizer is recommended because it's less likely to shock your plants. And watch the amount carefully. Over-doses kill plants too! Organic fertilizer blends are good because they provide a diverse formula of nutrients and minerals to support a variety of plants.

Weed! Weed! Weed! Nothing is more important to maintaining your attractive green garden than removing weeds as soon as they begin to appear. This begins before you even plant your new seeds. You must consistently hoe and cultivate between plants, getting as close to the base stem as possible, to protect the desired plants' root systems. Removing the weeds will also help maintain a healthy balance of moisture that prevents healthy plant dehydration and browning. Using plenty of mulch will also help prevent weeds and maintain moisture, in addition to making your garden appear neat and clean.

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Mind the gaps! Thinning, weeding, and pinching back dead growth will like create a few small gaps in your green garden. Browse your local plant stores for late-season sales and markdowns, and use those plants to both fill in the gaps and add a little color to your green garden. They may not last long, but they'll add immensely to your garden's beauty.

For a green garden, be sure you've done your homework on the plants that thrive in your climate. Know what zone you live in, and plan your garden accordingly. Using the appropriate plants is an easy way to maintain a green garden longer through the season. These plants most likely grow wild in many areas of your zone, so they'll be more hardy and less susceptible to overly moist or overly dry conditions should they occur. Though you may want to use other plants that are not natural or native to your zone, you'll pay for it with early browning and quickly-dying greenery. It's not worth the gamble.

After all the work of creating a green garden, it's well worth the marginal addition of time and effort to given your garden the best care and keep it green weeks beyond what you'd expect without that extra care. Keeping your green garden healthy and vibrant weeks to months longer allows you and your neighbors to enjoy it more. And keeping a green garden past the normal growing season fights off those cold-weather doldrums.

Taking these few simple actions will keep your green garden green and productive longer than it has ever been before. And your satisfaction will carry you further into the winter than you might expect. Truly enjoy your outdoor living! Take the time to pinch, pull, and mulch your green garden throughout the summer and into the fall.



## Optimizing Your Garden For Drought Or Water Conservation

Gardeners in my area are pulling their hair out due to the long-term dry spell we've been having. Being a gardener in Colorado over the past few years has been a stressful proposition. A severe drought has forced water restrictions that limit the amount of water available for gardens and lawns to the point that the plants can't survive. I've been forced to make changes in my garden so it uses water more efficiently.

Low and behold, I'm the only one in the neighborhood now with a colorful vibrant garden! So I want to share some of the things I've learned about saving water with anyone who's had to deal with prolonged drought or water shortages.

The first thing I did was take all the plants out of the garden. The soil just wasn't holding moisture well, forcing me to use twice as much water as the plants needed to fill their nutrient requirements. I added a lot of good, organic compost to the soil to help prevent water from escaping and encourage my plants' roots to grow and give more stability.

After optimizing the soil in this way and developing a new low-water plan, I replaced my plants, but not in the same spots they had been before. I tried to group them according to their need for water. I put the plants that don't need as much water on one side and staggered the groups that needed more water to the other side. That way, the plants with the greatest need for water were together as well. This really worked out well because now I don't over-water plants with less need. Plants that do need a lot of water get what they need without drowning my other plants. I'm conserving water and using what I can more effectively.

Next, I installed a drip irrigation system that further helped make the most of my limited water resources. Especially effective during the drought, the drip system kept the soil constantly moist without soaking it. The drip irrigation system doesn't waste a single drop of precious water. I lose little to evaporation, and I don't over-water or create conditions for rot and diseases. The really great thing about it is that all I have to do is turn it on, and it does the work. No more back-bending hours with a water can in my garden!

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These steps didn't solve all my problems, though. I found that some plants required so much water that it threatened the health of my other plants by cutting back on the water overall. So I decided to substitute the really water-gulping plants with plants with low water requirements. I found some Heavenly Bamboo to use as a shrub to border the garden and make it more interesting. Both decorative and drought-tolerant, the Heavenly Bamboo really improved the overall look of my garden. I learned at the nursery that there are a variety of drought-resistant plants I could have selected.

I replaced a couple of water-guzzling Fuchias with herbs that didn't need much water and also really spiced up our family's meals. And I removed the container plants in my yard. They needed too much water, and much of it drained out the bottom of the container anyway.

When I was shopping for low-water needs plants, I learned about a lot of flowers that did well with less water. Varieties of penstemon (or beard-tongue) my nursery recommended were Moonbeam, Midnight, Apple Blossom, and Garnet. They said if I wanted to attract butterflies or hummingbirds, I should try Yarrow or Cosmos. The plants at the nursery didn't look rugged, but they are. They continue to produce beautiful flowers in droughts.

I already had lots of Lavender. I love it. And it survives drought well. I have a large bunch of Lavender plants at the low-water side of my garden, and they're gorgeous! I'm so glad I didn't have to take those plants out.

Another plant that's doing really well is the Pineapple Sage. This two-foot shrub really does smell like pineapple, and it attracts the hummingbirds that start my days off so nicely. I also use it to add a bit of spice to drinks.

I've had such great success in modifying my garden for the long-term drought we've been suffering that I've made a decision. From now on, I'm going to plan my gardens around the way my plants use water. It doesn't really matter whether we're in a drought. Saving water is a practical and responsible goal for every gardening enthusiast.

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In the future, I'll be sure to use plenty of compost and water-conserving landscape principles. But more than anything else, I'll give serious thought to how to arrange my garden to make best use of water, no matter how much I have available.

## Why Teak Outdoor Garden Furniture?

Teak is the perfect material for outdoor garden furniture. It's a dense, coarse-grained hardwood that contains oils that repel insects, resist heavy moisture, and prevent the drying effects of hot weather. The teak tree is native to parts of India, Burma, Thailand, and Java. It's also grown in Africa, the Caribbean, and Brazil.

For centuries, teak was a standard material used to construct of sailing ships and clippers, and many 100-year-old park benches in English parks and gardens come from the wood salvaged from ships after they were dismantled. Today, teak is a major material for the construction of modern yachts, sailboats, and luxury cruisers. Boat owners prize its beauty and durability. During the second World War, teak was even used for the landing decks of aircraft carriers.

Oddly, teak is not a tropical rain-forest product. It grows best on hillsides with good drainage. Dutch colonists established many teak plantations in the early 1800s that are well-managed by the Javanese government today. In the plantations, it takes about 55 years to grow a mature teak tree to its peak of 150 feet tall and from 3-5 feet in diameter. Because there are so many well-managed teak plantations around the world, teak wood and outdoor garden furniture made from it will likely be available for centuries to come.

Known for its durable strength, teakwood has a beautiful golden hue, and it's natural finish seldom needs stains or paint. Exposure to sun and rain, produces a silver-gray hue that is equally attractive. Due to its inherent oils, teakwood outdoor garden furniture needs little care, though natural discoloration can be uneven. Your teakwood outdoor garden furniture will be knot-free and smooth, and you'll never have to replace it - unless you want to.

If your teakwood outdoor garden furniture has already been treated, you need do little more than wipe it to remove dust and rain spots. But you can leave it untreated up to six years without damaging your outdoor garden furniture. At five to six years, you might apply teak oil to maintain moisture. You can also use olive oil, but it evaporates more quickly than natural teak oil.

The designs of teak outdoor garden furniture are simple, elegant, and comfortable. It's built to be durable, and most teak outdoor garden furniture is available at prices comparable to other

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outdoor garden furniture. Of course, you can select cushion materials and accessories to coordinate with your garden's existing decor.

Teak's natural elegance lends beauty to its durability. You can find a variety of designs and ensemble sets that will compliment your landscaping and deck or patio layout. Teak outdoor garden furniture is lightweight and easily moved, unless more traditional wrought-iron pieces. You'll find a wide variety of pieces to beautify your outdoor entertaining space - tables, chairs, outdoor sofas, benches, storage bins, swings, bars, and barstools. Most sellers provide coordinated waterproof seating cushions and furniture covers that only add to your furniture's attractive appearance.

When you purchase teak outdoor garden furniture, you're making a wise investment in your future and in the beauty of your surroundings. Beautiful and durable, the natural beauty of teakwood is enhanced by its minimal care requirements. You'll find a wide variety of teakwood outdoor garden furniture on the internet as well as in your local stores.

## Gardening Tips Flower Gardens

To make your garden a beautiful place you will have to follow a few essential gardening tips so that you have a basic idea of what to grow in your garden and how to make it look colorful with a lot of flowering plants in it to add to its beauty. A garden is like a bouquet which you will have to arrange carefully to get the most out of it. The space you have will have to be used effectively so that it is shown to advantage.

A few practical ideas and tips on flower gardening to help you to get the best and most effective results from your gardening efforts:

- \* To retain moisture around the plants and to prevent weeds from growing mulch is very useful. A good quality of mulch can add fiber to the soil and prevent moisture from evaporating from around the plants, and from weeds growing around it in the soil. This is a great help as it reduces the job of pulling out the weeds from the plants.

- \* Pinching the head of the dead flower from the plant or dead heading as it is called will help in more flowers blooming on the plant. This is a very effective method for flowers like roses, verbena and geraniums. If deheading is done for these plants you will get blooms throughout the season.

- \* Flower fertilizer should be used regularly for flowering plants. You will get a good harvest of blooms regularly if you use the right kind of fertilizer for the plants. Flowers like blueberries, hydrangeas and azaleas need a particular type of fertilizer and an acidic soil for good blooms on your plants.

- \* A useful way to recycle waste materials in the house is composting by which you can make your own fertilizers and mulch combinations. By composting you invite worms and butterflies into your garden which are very necessary for the soil and for pollination.

- \* Put plants that require the same amount of watering and sunlight together so that they get the maximum

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benefit from the sun and from water. Some plants need watering regularly where as some need not be watered so often, so make sure you segregate them and plant them with similar plants.

### **Water flower gardens frequently**

Constant care should be given to flower gardens and they should be watered frequently as per gardening experts. What they need most is water, fertilizer and light to thrive on. The soil around the flower plant should be dampened on alternate days and should be well watered at least once a week too. It is better to water the plants in the morning as watering in the evening may cause the plant to rot. You could even check with the nursery in your locality on the best way to manage your garden and especially flowering plants.

## **Home Depot Gardening**

A gardening enthusiast can get all the equipment and paraphernalia that they would need for their garden at the Home Depot store in the gardening section. All kinds of machinery for gardening like rakes and pruners, shovels, clippers, and shears are available here in the gardening section of the Home Depot Store. One can also get seeds, plants and plant products, fertilizers, pest control products and any other fancy stuff for your garden. You can get yourself stuff to do a good landscaping job, watering equipment, and decorations for your garden at this store. Gardening tips and books on gardening are also available here.

### **Tips on planting**

According to the expert tips of the Home Depot, it is better to plant flowers on a day when the sky is overcast and it may rain instead of on a warm sunny day. The rain will do the plants a lot of good. So it is better to plant the new plants for the year and the perennial plants before the last frost date for the season. Perennials should be planted during the early fall in the North, and during the late fall in the South.

### **How to choose your new plants**

It will help to be careful while choosing your new plants. do not buy plants that are wilted and discolored and with spindly stems, but select those that have a healthy foliage and with short and sturdy stems and only a few flowers to start with. To repot it you will have to knock the old pot off and then disentangle the roots before you plant them in the soil. this way the roots will spread out better. It is also better to pinch all the flowers and buds off so that the plant can use all its energy in developing firm and healthy roots instead of putting all its nutrients into the flowers in the beginning. This way you will get a better crop of flowers later.

### **How to prepare a flower bed**

Mix at least one inch of organic matter into a flower bed that has been prepared with a spade. Every year, to improve the soil you should add some organic matter or rotted manure, compost, peat moss and sphagnum to it. Another different method is to cover the top of the flower bed



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with a compost layer of at least 2 inches. For plants that have to be planted annually you should loosen the soil up to a depth of 12 inches and for perennials to a depth of 18 inches. After this smoothen out the ground with a rake and then plant the plants at the same level in the soil as they were in the pot.

After you have planted the potted plants in the soil, add between one to three inches of organic mulch like pine needles, bark, grass clippings or wood chip mulch. This covering will conserve the moisture, prevent any diseases and also prevent the growth of weeds.

You can get a lot of information and guidance on pruning a hedge, starting a lawn, and planting trees in the Home Depot gardening. There are guides for buying planters, pond pumps, hoses and valves too.

## **Hand Gardening Tools – Time For A Change**

No matter what sort of gardening you plan to do hand gardening tools are a must and you cannot do without them. There is a toll for every task and this makes the job much easier today than it did earlier. Earlier the tools were more like those used on a farm and we had to make do with them no matter what the size was. However times have changed and we now have smaller and sleeker hand gardening tools which are much easier to use.

### **A wide range of hand gardening tools**

There is a wide range of hand gardening tools and one for almost every task you have in the garden: Compositors, laser levels, seed spoons, planting tools, augers for digging holes for bulbs, spreaders for fertilizers, hoes, axes, loppers, knives for pruning, trimmers, forks for weeding, sheers, digging tined forks, cultivators, spades and shovels to name a few. These are just the basics of gardening tools and they may be so many in each category too.

Gardening tools are sold on the internet too if you have broken a family heirloom that has been passed down generations from your grand mother to your mother and then down to you, then you have to replace it before you tell them what you have done. That is no problem. You can now find what you want easily on the internet and through catalogues. You need not go out to buy it but can have it shipped or mailed to your residence. You could start your search at the next door nursery and if you do not get it there is no need to panic, you will definitely find a sleeker and much better one than the family heirloom that you broke. The tools that you get now are not just sleek but have the latest technology incorporated in them.

### **Gift your Mom with a light weight easy to use hand gardening tool**

If you want to get a new set of hand gardening tools for your mother, you will have to have a look at all the new ones in the market. You can now get hand gardening tools that are made of aluminum, stainless steel and iron. These different materials mean that the tool will either be light or heavy. You should keep in mind the kind of gardening you are going to do, and whether the soil is hard or soft before deciding on the material of

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the gardening tool that you ought to buy. You should think of the price and affordability of the tool, the place to store them and the general look of these tools. If everything is just perfect and you get yourself exactly what you know your mother would love to have, you can feel quite relieved.

## **60-Perennial Container Gardening**

A gardener has to think about how to make his garden look beautiful and how he can successfully do a good job of the landscaping. Many prefer to have annual plants while others like perennials only. It is always better to have a combination of both in your garden. Perennial plants will bloom several times during the year if the blooms that have come up and then dried are clipped properly and regularly. You can have the same plants giving you beautiful flowers right through the year, and this is why they are much more perfect when you have a garden for perennial containers.

### **Perennial plants are hardy by nature**

Perennial plants are resilient to many plant hazards and can survive in any kind of conditions where even trees and scrubs do not grow much. These are very hardy plants and as they have such beautiful flowers too, are very advantageous to have in your garden. You can have some very nice and exotic displays with these perennial plants that will add to the beauty of your garden. Because the kind of roots that they have it is always better to pot them in containers that are deep and wide. These plants protect themselves by developing deeper underground.

### **What you need for perennial plants**

For your perennial plants you need a proper container that has good drainage, you should also have a selection of different perennial to plant in the containers and to make an exotic and colorful composition. You could plant several different blooms together and for those plants that do not have blooms, they provide the foliage as a back drop.

Re plant the perennials often as these plants grow very rapidly and multiply they get too large for the container. You will have to remove them from the container and separate the excess plants and put them in different plant holders regularly to avoid them getting cluttered. The young plants that come up could be replanted in the soil or in different containers or you could gift them away to friends and other gardening enthusiasts. These plants are not too expensive and you can get a number of plants from just one of them especially if they are well cared for.

**Perennials are an easy way to have constant blooms**

You can have blooms in your landscaping and containers constantly with perennial plants. You could pick out all your favorite kinds and make beautiful arrangements in the containers which will last you for years.

## **Home Gardening Supplies To Beat Back The Forest**

If you have been living in town all along and have now moved into a your own cottage then you will probably not have too much knowledge of beating back the forest which is threatening to overtake your whole garden and encroaching on every conceivable spot of ground. You will now have to get yourself some gardening supplies for the trees, bushes, lawn and also the walkways so that you can keep a well maintained area surrounding your home.

### **Supplies which you will need for your home garden**

An expanse of green in your garden is something that everyone appreciates but if you have an overgrown unkempt yard then you could be liable to pay a fine in some cities. To make sure that your lawn is kept well mowed you should get yourself a lawn mower that either is powered by gasoline or by electricity. This is one of the most used tools in your garden and you should get one that is hardy and can maintain your lawn well. You will have to decide on the size of the mower according to the amount of lawn that you have. If you get a lawn mower with a built in bag then you will not have the problem of cleaning up after you have finished mowing the lawn.

### **Gardening tools for trimming tree branches and bushes**

If the bushes you have planted have a slow growth rate it is fine, but if not then you will have to be trimming them often to make them look neat and tidy. Bush trimmers too are also gasoline or electric models, but you could also get the manual shears to trim the bushes with, but that is only if you do not have too many. If you have flowering bushes then you should find out whether you should trim them before they flower or after they have finished blooming. Bushes should be kept away from the home foundation to avoid rot caused by moisture.

To trim branches and sprigs that come up every now and then you would need tree limb cutters. You could get these with long handles so that you could reach up into the taller bushes and trees and trim the branches. Saws and electric trimmers are also available.

**A weed whacker for walkways**

The crevices in the walk way are often overgrown with weeds that need to be pulled out or trimmed. To do this in a mechanical and neat way it is better to get a weed whacker. These present day gadgets do a good job of getting rid of all the weeds in the crevices with the nylon thread that is very effective in pulling out the weeds in the crevices of the walkway. Weeds could also be kept down chemically, but this does not work if you have pets.

Keeping your garden and the pathways around it clean may be a constant job, but most people find it worthwhile to maintain the look of their home and would much rather have a nice home than a one that is over run by weeds and the forest.

## 181-Home Gardening

Home gardening is an enjoyable, relaxing and most of all an inexpensive hobby. It sets your mood, keeps you alive and stress free. A lot of people nowadays have been into gardening. They started turning their front and back yards into a sight to behold with bountiful colored flowers and blossoms or greenery. The process is easy and can be done in just few steps. By having the right tools; knowing what, where, when and how to plant, you can now indulge yourself in gardening and have fun without leaving your home.

Home gardening is growing in popularity. Some people garden as a hobby and some to make money. It is very innate in every person to appreciate design, beauty and symmetry. Everyone would love the sight of a garden in abundance of beautiful flowers in vibrant colors, although some people would prefer a bed of greenery. Freshly cut flowers in the living room will somehow bring a tinge of the summer indoors. It will be enjoyable to grow vegetables, too. Whatever your preference is, give your yard a face lift and make it a magical sight of elegance and beauty.

Many people had already made a way for home gardening into their own front and back yards. Statistics had it that it has become a favorite leisure activity, placed ahead of time spent with family, but not on top of reading and watching television. Another thing is that one out of every three families are more into home gardening nowadays with most gardens found in urban areas.

A person with a green thumb they say is gifted with the ability of growing plants. This may be true, but it doesn't mean that people not having this gift cannot do home gardening anymore. It's a matter of personal taste. Everyone, young and old, who has the willingness to learn how to plant can be a home gardener. There are a hundred and one reasons to plant a vegetable or a flower garden in your own yard and the benefits people get keep getting better and better all the time.

### **A Good Plan Today is Better than a Perfect Plan Tomorrow**

Home gardening can be done in few simplified steps. There are lots of easy approaches on how to do gardening. First is having a plan. It will be better if you draw a picture of what kind of plants you want and where you want them planted. Of equal importance is knowing your plants



## **Your Garden – Neighbor's Envy, Owner's Pride!**

and finding time to do a little research in a local library or a bookstore to get acquainted about the flowers or the vegetables you are growing will help you a lot in the process and will give you a clear cut definition of how they will be grown. Determining the type of soil, how much space, the amount of shade or sunlight and how much water your plants require will always give you almost perfect results. The second is the right gardening tools. You are going to need a shovel, a rake and a trowel to loosen and soften the soil to make it easier in creating the holes for the plants.

Having done these things, you are now ready to execute your home gardening plan. Before planting, you weed out the grass as this may take over the garden before your plants even begin to grow, then till the soil so it becomes loose and soft. Most importantly, apply compost or manure or a well-rotted animal a week before you plan to plant. This will make both the soil and your plants grow healthy.

### **Planting and Taking Care of Your Home Garden**

Home gardening requires lots of nurturing for your plants. Planting and caring for your garden gives you a feeling of creativity as you turn that spot in your yard a masterpiece. Planting your garden can be done as much as possible in the spring and fall. This kind of conditions that ideally enable plants to grow and mature very well. You can either grow the flowers from seeds, especially during wintertime, or buy from a nursery. For a flower garden it is best to note which area you want to use gets the full or partial sun or the most shade. This will enable you to change the kind of flowers you can plant on your beds. For a vegetable garden, you have to dig holes in rows. Small holes for seeds, deep holes for bulb roots. Bulb naturally multiply and produces more blooms every now and then. In planting trees and shrubs, the dirt attached to the bulb is included and make sure the roots are deep enough to cover it all in order to protect it from animals.

For the most part during the growing season, gardens require a weekly moisture supply tantamount to one inch of rain. Weed your garden as frequently as possible. You don't want a garden full of grass. Mulch your home garden because it keeps it from drying out. These rotting vegetables will act as your protective covering and reduces soil erosion. When it matures, trust me, you can now decide what you want the end product of your garden to be. So let your home gardening tell the story, let it convey the power it possesses and let it take control of the environment for you, for your family and for your friends as well as your neighbors.