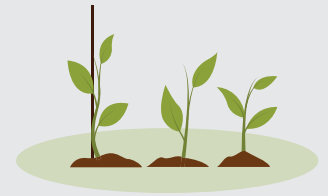


10 STEPS TO STARTING A GARDEN



"The journey of gardening takes thoughtful consideration, consistent care, and an open mind."

1. Pick Your Garden Site

Is there somewhere you'd like to enjoy a garden, is there a place you'd like to surround with a garden or an area where it is challenging to grow grass? All of these are valid reasons to begin planning a garden and will place you right where you'd like to start. Remember! From a single pot to a large inground space, there are no size requirements for a garden.

2. Observe Your Site

Try experiencing the site at different times of day in different months through the year. Walk around, touch the soil, look overhead. Try to take note of:

- The total hours of sun in an average day of each month throughout the growing season.
- Whether the soil is dry or moist and how well it retains water. Are there any seasonal forces influencing this area like spring flooding or high winds?

3. Make a Planting List

Research what grows best in the environment you've made note of. Prioritize native plants that offer food or shelter to beneficial bugs and birds. From here pick plants that compliment each other in texture, color and form and that suit your fancy.

4. Make a Planting Plan

Draw a quick map of the space. Using circles for the plants, create an aerial view of where you might place everything. Bear in mind the mature width and height of each plant. Feel free to take a few tries until you find a pleasing arrangement. This is where you get to dream up your garden and how it will look in real time.

5. Purchase Plants & Seeds

Start with your local plant nursery, these folks are experts in what works where you are! Your local garden clubs may have plants sales and online sources are also excellent for seeds. Check them out! It's ok if you can't buy everything in one season, when you can!

6. Prepare Planting Bed

It's time to dig in! You may be starting with an empty pot to

which you will add potting soil, be sure the pot has a drainage hole in the bottom that you can cover with a bit of landscape cloth. You want water to drain but not soil. For inground gardens start by establishing your shape using a hose or a heavy rope to guide your edging. Create an edge by digging a trench along your hose or rope. Then you may dig out grass and weeds from the area or smother grass and weeds using thick cardboard or newspaper (at least 5 sheets thick) to cover entire area of garden then add well rotted compost or triple mix on top. This is called the lasagna method.

7. Plant!

Seeds have differing light, moisture and temperature requirements to germinate and grow. The seed packet is your best source for information here. For potted plants, dig a hole for each plant that is twice as wide as the plant's current roots are long. Gently slide the plant from the pot and into the middle of the hole. Start filling the planting hole back in, firmly tamping the soil around it. If you have used the lasagna method, you can cut a hole into the cardboard or newspaper where you want the plants to go then dig in!

8. Mulch

Adding a top dressing of mulch is a great way to suppress weeds, retain moisture and create some temperature control for a plant's root's. Mulch also adds nutrients as it slowly breaks down. Mulches range from wood chips, bark, shredded leaves or straw. Add mulch as you can to the entirety of your garden space.

9. Water & Weed

As your plants begin to establish themselves in their new home it is key to give them a strong start. Stick to a watering schedule that serves the needs of each plant and keep weeds away. Consistency and observation are your friends at this stage!

10. Enjoy the Process

The very best part of gardening is enjoying the process! Watch your garden grow, observe what is working, what is challenging and what surprises you. If you can, record your experiences in the garden for future reference, pictures can really help you to remember key moments in the garden.



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