

REFERENCES

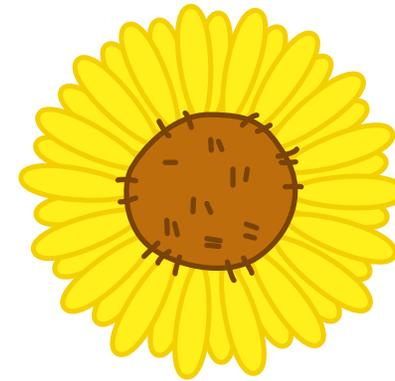
Purdue Master Gardener Manual, Helping Others Grow
Current link for Resources: www.hort.purdue.edu/mg
[www.Purdue Master Gardener](http://www.PurdueMasterGardener.com)
[www.usda.gov/home/National Organic Program](http://www.usda.gov/home/NationalOrganicProgram)
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“EVERYDAY GARDENING FOR EVERYONE”

EDUCATION FOCUS GROUP
2015-2016

Our goal in producing “Everyday Gardening for Everyone”: is to show that anybody can garden. If you no longer garden due to age limitations, physical or other challenges with a few creative adaptations you can reap the rewards and satisfaction, in growing a garden.

Gardening is the purest of human pleasures.
Francis Bacon

ORGANIC TIDBITS

What do you think of when you hear the term “Organic Gardening”? The USDA has very specific guidelines for foods produced commercially for “organic” certification. However, for the home gardener there is no formal definition. What you and I would consider as organic gardening is actually “Natural” gardening. Either term could be used interchangeable and would be correct. As an organic gardener we should be concerned about sustaining the environment. Our goals should be to:

- Reduce the use of chemicals
- Reduce Pollution
- Reduce yard waste,
- Reduce water usage.

There are many products on the market that claim to be “organic”. If in doubt, check it out with a reliable source such as your County Extension Office or a reliable resource that knows the science behind the organic claim.



LET’S REVIEW:

This booklet contains a great deal of information that has been condensed into a few short pages, from organic tidbits, garden tools, gardening tips to various types of gardens. This is to peek your curiosity to learn more. Let’s review, some things are implied but not necessarily mentioned, but should be remembered about planning a garden, or just one plant in a pot.

- Use the right tool for the right job. This includes everything from garden gloves to the containers used for planting.
- Plant the right plant in the right soil. Different plants have different nutrient requirements. Soils also vary and may need to be amended to produce healthy vegetables or flowers.
- Plant it in the right place. Where to plant, container or ground–sun or shade? Don’t forget the climate zone. California poppies are perennials in California, probably not in Indiana.
- Keep the plant moist without drowning it. Some plants do have different moisture requirements. Like you, plants need oxygen to breathe. Over watering keeps the oxygen away from the root and the plant literally drowns.
- Use common sense–think back to the things your grandfather said about gardening. Ninety nine and a half percent are true.
- Lastly, if in doubt check it out and get the facts. Call your County Extension Office.

HELPFUL GARDEN TOOLS

Backache slowing you down? Arthritis flaring up? Worry not. Pick up a rake and head for the garden.

Avid gardeners who are challenged by physical problems now can choose from a wide variety of therapeutic tools to ease the aches and pains that come with gardening. Many of these tools are readily available locally, on line and by mail order.

Raised gardening beds outside in various heights are suited for different people and garden spaces. Some of the garden tools for special needs include: oscillating hoes, which relieve pressure on the back, are helpful to persons with diminished strength and endurance. They work through a push and pull movement from a standing, not crouching, position. One-handed flower snips are designed for persons with bending difficulties or impaired mobility. Ratcheting pruners and loppers takes little pressure to cut through branches as they magnify and conserve the force applied. Any gardener who has ever suffered a bruised palm from pruning will appreciate these tools. They also have most gardening tools with rubber grips to help persons with swollen or deteriorating joints of the hand. Ergonomic garden tools, such as small hoes, cultivators and spades are engineered to allow use of elbow joint strength rather than that of the hand or wrist. Tools with soft rubber grips which can be found at most neighborhood stores will help persons suffering from arthritis or degenerative bone disease.

Joyce Schillen, author of *The Growing Season*, says that arthritis, disabilities, injuries or other health problems can make gardening difficult without some special consideration, and those gardeners are ironically the ones that could benefit most from gardening.



KEYHOLE GARDENING

Limited space, then consider a keyhole garden. This kind of garden is a circular raised bed, excellent for a vegetable patch. The center of the keyhole garden is a compost section that serves to fertilize your garden as it is watered. Raised bed gardens give you an eye-catching feature, a better view of your plants and puts less strain on your back. Directions for a keyhole garden can be found on the internet, library reference books and by contacting the Master Gardeners at your local Extension Office.

HYDROPONIC GARDENING

Desire to grow vegetables, but you don't like dirt or you don't have an outdoor space, try hydroponic gardening. Hydroponic systems allow gardening all year round, even in the winter. The systems use water as a medium instead of dirt. People can grow herbs, greens, tomatoes and other vegetables using the hydroponic system. There is an expense to start and maintain this type of gardening. Artificial lighting, recirculating water pump, special trays, nutrient-rich soil and a growing medium to hold the plant roots in place are needed for growing our own food. This is an excellent way to garden for people living in apartments, condos, or other places where outdoor gardening is not possible. Different types of hydroponic systems can be purchased or you can learn how to make your own system by researching on the internet, at the library, or through the Master Gardeners at your Extension Office.

COMPOSTING

To give your plants the best possible nutrient-rich humus, you need to compost. Composting can be as simple as having a spot in your garden or yard to recycle kitchen and yard waste. At least 30 percent of household waste could be used in a compost pile. This is good for our environment because it is a natural alternative to chemical fertilizers and it eliminates some of the wastes in the landfill.

What to compost is one big question, here are two suggestions: crushed eggshells, and leaves are better and break down faster when shredded. Only add thin layers of any plants or plant matter because it will save the compost from clumping or matting. Be careful to use only disease free plants and ones that have not gone to seed. Try not to use woody prunings because they break down slowly. Straw is better than hay, and pine needles would be a great activator. Shredded paper is good but avoid foils, glossy paper and colored inks. Remember to shred materials to avoid matting. Chicken manure can be used if it contains only natural fibers.

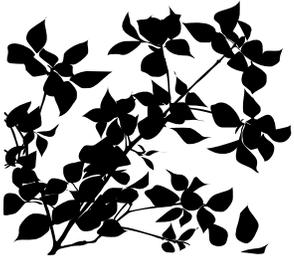
For coffee drinkers, keep those grounds to put on the compost in layers to avoid clumping. However, tea leaves should be used very sparingly. Use a layer of garden soil to help mask any odors. And, any microorganisms that are in that soil will help the composting process.

What to avoid: do not compost meat, bones, or fish bones because they will attract pests. Also, leave out perennial weeds or diseased plants. Never include pet manure on compost that may be used for food crops. Never use black walnut leaves.

Start your compost pile on bare earth so worms and bugs can make their home there. Be sure to water your compost heap or let rain help you. You may need to cover the heap with plastic sheeting or

TOOLS & GARDENING TIPS (CON'T)

8. An old toothbrush can be a most helpful garden tool. Use the end of the handle to dig grooves when planting seeds. Then use the brush to gently cover the seeds with soil.
9. Protect your garden from slugs by spreading a layer of crushed eggshells around each plant.
10. There is plenty of room to write on paintsticks. They are handy as plant markers.
11. To control pith borers from burrowing into rose canes through pruning cuts, place a drop of white school glue or household glue on the cut surface.
12. Don't toss those empty yogurt cups. Use them as flower pots for seedlings and young transplants. Poke 3-4 holes for drainage. Use the lids as saucers.
13. DO NOT drown your plants—to avoid overwatering use containers that have drainage holes. Read moisture requirement for your plants and follow them. Before watering check to see if the soil is moist. To do this push in your finger to the second knuckle and if it feels dry then water your plant.
14. BEWARE, make sure that all the plants in your container share the same sun, water, and soil requirements. This info should be on the plant labels.
15. DO NOT fear pruning—if your plants start looking leggy do not be afraid to prune/cut them back.
16. DO NOT buy sick plants.
17. DO NOT HAVE UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.



TOOLS & GARDENING TIPS

1. Lightweight tools help. Look for tools made from fiberglass, aluminum and other light metals by reliable manufacturers—something poorly constructed might bend or break.
2. Children’s gardening tools are often small, light, and durable. also look for small headed tools for better control.
3. Long handled tools can extend your reach up to six feet and provide leverage, but find the lightest model you can. Reachers of every variety are also handy and found in medical supply stores and garden centers.
4. Spring-released tools, such as pruners and scissors compensate for weak hands and save time. Cordless power tools also help.
5. Watering is integral in gardening, but weighs eight pounds a gallon.. It’s tough to haul around a watering can so watering aids were created to make things easier. They come in many styles. A watering wand (from 18-36 inches) attached to a hose will extend your reach to high places and those farther back. Extension hoses (with hose guides to keep them under control) are also very useful. Many people find a soaker hose set on low provides an efficient method of watering or an oscillating sprinkler covers a lot of ground. Give beds a good soak early morning so the sun won’t evaporate water or cause burning from reflection.
6. To become part of the seed saver movement, check out web site-www.seedsaver.org. Be part of history by planting heirloom seeds that have been passed down from generation to generation.
7. To keep rabbits out of flower beds, place mothballs among plants.

COMPOSTING (CON’T)

carpet scraps to prevent the compost from getting too much water. You want it to be moist, but not soaked.

Use a pitchfork or shovel to turn the pile weekly. Turning will give it enough oxygen for the process to work quickly.

Now you know how to save 30 percent of your kitchen scraps, and yard waste. Improve your garden soil and produce veggies, fruit, and flowers like a pro. Let’s remember that compost should be used to enrich your soil, not as 100 percent planting medium.

For those who want to start composting in their homes, the cheapest method is vermicomposting which can be done in a small container using worms.

“The worms can eat a half pound of fruit and vegetable bits, eggshells and coffee grounds a day, and if you manage the composter well, you should forget it’s even there.” Said Teddy Tedesco, project manager for the New York City Compost Project, hosted by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

The general rule is a pound of worms per square foot of surface area of the composting bin. The resulting vermicompost (worm poop) is then moved to a separate container with a few holes punched in the lid to be cured, generally for about a week or so.

In a small composter, red wiggler worms—widely available online—process food waste, which is then cured and used to enrich soil. So long as the worms are not fed meat, dairy or grains, or kale, broccoli or cabbage, the odors are minimal, Tedesco said.

CONTAINER GARDENING

Container gardening has endless opportunities. Container gardens can be for practical purposes, such as being used to grow herbs and vegetables to being used for decorative purposes.

Container gardening is a developing trend in the city, apartments, rooftops and small spaces where yards and “green spaces” are not readily available.

Containers can be anything from a bucket or old tire, to very large pots that can become very expensive. The container being selected needs to take the root needs and size of plants into consideration when making this choice, and also the space available for the container with its contents.

Drainage is essential for whatever container you decide on. Without drainage the soil will become waterlogged and plants can die. The holes do not have to be large but you need enough of them so that excess water can drain out, if needed. A container without holes is best used as a cachepot, or cover, to hide a plain pot. Grow your plant in an ordinary pot that fits inside the decorative cachepot so you can move them separately.

When choosing a container, keep in mind that it's easier to grow plants in large containers than small ones. This is because large containers hold more soil, and it stays moist longer and is less subject to temperature fluctuations. Small hanging baskets have a tendency to dry out very easily and tend not to grow well in hot temperatures. You may need to water daily and even twice a day.

Gardeners talk about “good soil”. It is actually better to use something labeled “potting mix” than potting soil. The potting soil is likely to be a poor quality and sticky with poor drainage. Potting mix is lighter, made mainly of organic matter such as peat or composted plant matter. It is also designated to give container plants the texture and drainage they need.

CONTAINER GARDENING (CON'T)

Plan to fertilize. Frequent watering tends to wash away nutrients from the pot's soil. Use a regular houseplant fertilizer at one half the strength recommended about every three weeks.

Single containers can be used to add colorful plants to make an area look inviting. Areas for consideration are entryways, patios, porches, and walkways. Clusters of pots can contain a collection of favorite flower plants and vegetable plants for fresh produce. You can even have a container garden indoors for fresh herbs that line your counter tops and are decorative as well as functional.

Some plants such as the hen and chicks (*sempervivum*) or herbs are used for ornament and cooking.

Containers planted with a mix of plants are fun to create and can offer unlimited possibilities and combinations.

The best combination plants are those that feature handsome foliage and flowers produced over a long bloom season. An easy guideline for choosing plants to combine in a container is to include “a thriller”, a “spiller, and a “filler”. This means at least one focal point plant (thriller), and this could be a coleus or a geranium that has multicolored leaves combined with plants that trail or “spill” over the edge of the containers/pots. Plants to consider might be petunias, bacopa, creeping zinnias and ornamental sweet potatoes. The last type of plant is the filler. These should be plants with smaller leaves that will add color and fill in the space of the arrangement.

Good fillers include salvias, verbenas, ornamental peppers and wax begonias as well as foliage plants like parsley or licorice plants. You may also want to pick a plant for height such as an ornamental grass like purple fountain grass. You can also add a trellis to a container and add a vine to give it height to the composition. Typically you will need a total of five or six plants for an 18 to 24 inch container.

Container herbs, basil, rosemary, thyme and parsley are great choices for container plants. Herbs are a great way to start container gardening. They add a decorative flair and fragrance to your home.