

# Gardening How To's: Anywhere, Anytime



**G**ardening is not a matter of luck or genetics or wrangling Mother Nature to work against what she wants to do. It is learning the simple rules that nature follows to help plants grow. You can have a successful garden without a lot of work, time and effort throughout the year. Here's how:

**Tools.** Get the right tools. Most everything I do can be done with a [Japanese Gardening knife](#), [gardening gloves](#), a bucket, a watering can, and occasionally a wheelbarrow.

**Location.** There are some guidelines on where to position the garden in your yard.

- Find a place close to the house with good sun access (6+ hrs) where you will see it.
- Stay 20 feet away from shallow rooted trees.
- Choose a fairly level area for drainage if possible, or create terraces that are level.
- Consider putting your garden in your landscape so it can fill two purposes.

**Soil.** Good soil is one of the most important parts of your garden. "Treat the soil well, and it will be generous in return."

- Nourish it every year by adding manure, leaves, grass clippings, compost ([create your own](#)), or Kitchen Scraps to soil.
- Don't add meat scraps and bones (attracts mice), weeds (you don't want more weed seeds there) and non-biodegradable items.
- Don't walk on planting areas. Create paths instead, where you know you won't be planting.

## Choosing what to plant.

- Plant what you eat most and buy most.
- Choose other things you always look forward to eating or treating yourself with.
- Look at the [Dirty Dozen](#) and [Clean Fifteen](#) from the Environmental Working Group. Let it guide your choices. We like to grow items seen on the "Dirty Dozen" list.
- Plant the foods you like to buy organically, like foods you eat the outside of.

**Seeds.** Not all garden seeds are created equal! You want to buy Non-Hybrid or Heirloom from seed catalogs like Baker Creek Seeds or Johnny's Select Seeds. Plants like tomatoes, peppers, melons, some herbs are usually easiest grown with starts.

**Planting.** Here are some rules of thumb:

- Grow tall plants and vertical grown plants on the North side of your growing area.
- Research what grows when and use the same space for multiple plantings. (Be sure to add compost before replanting!)
- Add other plants like marigolds or herbs to distract pests.
- Plant at the right time. Use guides to know [when the last frost is](#) and [when to plant](#).
- Plant seed three times the thickness of the seed.

**Watering.** Keep soil moist until seeds sprout, then water every other day for one week, then every third day for one week. Eventually, water leaf and root vegetables (greens, carrots, beets, etc) twice weekly, and fruit and seed vegetables (cucumbers, tomatoes, beans) once weekly. Water deeply (30-45 min) each time.

**Pests.** The most efficient form of organic pest control is healthy plants. Spread plants of the same type throughout the garden, remove diseased plants quickly, and don't put pests in your compost.

**Planting with limited space.** Take advantage of small places like flower beds, walls, edges of grass, in small sections in the garden, or in containers.