Ten Great Gardening Tips

Do you find yourself wanting to plant a garden every year, but you don’t know how to start? Are you afraid that all your work won’t yield results?

A well-planned garden can save you from many problems, including attacks from pests and diseases.

Here are a few handy tips to keep in mind before you pick up a trowel or open a seed packet.

Plan Your Garden

A complete plan to plant a healthy garden will save you a lot of time and energy later. Everything is important, from selecting the right place for a garden to choosing what you can grow according to the season. Seeds are usually sown in spring, while fall is favorable for planting trees, shrubs, bulbs, and some other perennials.

First decide what kind of garden you want to grow: a fruit garden, a vegetable garden, or a flower garden. Know when to sow and when to reap. Select your planting area according to your plants’ need for sunshine.

It is your garden and it is up to you to plant whatever you wish, but in the beginning, I would suggest that you start on a small scale. Once you understand the nature of your plants, it’s easier to expand the boundaries of your garden.

Clean up the Area

You need to clean up the area where you are planning yourgarden. You can get rid of the sod covering by smothering it with newspaper. Place a layer of five sheets of newspaper with a 3-inch layer of compost (or combination of potting soil

and topsoil) on it and then wait for about four months to let the compost and paper to decompose.

Your Soil Matters A Lot

If you know your soil type, then you can easily manage it and get the best out of it. The three basic types are sand, silt, and clay. And if you can’t recognize which one is yours, then take a sample to a nearby nursery or garden center.

Soil needs a boost as well, which can be done by adding some simple organic matter to it. Such organic material includes the addition of a 2- to 3 inch-wide layer of compost, decayed leaves, dry grass clippings, or old manure. It enhances the nutrient level and encourages life-giving soil microbes and worms.

Know when to dig the soil. Digging loosens the soil so roots can penetrate more easily, but digging when the soil is too wet or too dry can ruin its structure. You should dig only when the soil is moist enough to form a loose ball in your fist, but dry enough to fall apart when you drop it.

Mulch, One of Your Garden’s Best Friends

Sun, rain, and mulch are known as the best friends of a garden. A couple of inches of mulch will help keep weeds out and water in. The different sorts of mulch that are available include pine needles, cocoa hulls,and bark chips. For a vegetable garden or bed of annuals, you may choose a mulch that decomposes in a few months. Longer-lasting mulch, such as bark chips, is used for perennials.

Bring Seedlings Home

Bring all the seedlings outdoors (whether home grown or store

bought) and expose them to a steadily increasing amount of sun, wind, and temperatures lower or higher than what they were used to indoors. This process of hardening off gradually introduces seedlings to the conditions in your garden. This process may take about 2 weeks.

When to Plant

The ideal time to plant is when there is rain in the forecast and no frost or heat waves expected. In case forecasts are not that helpful, try to plant in the late afternoon or early evening to minimize the time the seedlings bake in the sun. The day before you planting anything, water the soil to keep it moist.

Planting

You should know which species to plant together depending on their similar requirements of soil, light and nutrients. You can either plant a single type or multiple types. Planting different species together may eliminate the risk of attacks from plant-specific pests.

Keep some space between your plants. Spacing is good for their growth and the bare patches can be filled with flowering plants.

Water Wise



(Infographic to the left – Why Gardening Is Good For Your Health).

The most important element in a plant's life is water. Seedlings should never dry out; they should be watered daily while they are small. New transplants also need frequent watering, every other day or so, until their roots become firm. The rest of the water requirements depend on your soil and climate.

Watering should be done slowly and deeply. The way you water a plant determines its health.

Pests and Diseases

Once you have decided to plant certain species, make sure you know what kind of pests and diseases attack them. Find organic ways to keep your plants healthy enough to avoid any such problem. And be prepared to tackle their arrival. It is better to know your problem beforehand.

And the Hard Work Continues…

A healthy garden is not a single day's job. You have to keep watering your plants properly and keep maintaining your garden. Fertilizers may change according to the season, and you will need to fertilize the soil halfway through the season. Keep up with your plants' needs and take care of them.

Get ready to have a garden of your own and rejoice in your success. You just need to keep investing time and effort. It will all pay off when the plants grow and you can sit back and enjoy the blessing of having your very own garden. A little hard work today will bring plenty of joy later.

Further Reading:

- *Planning Your Organic Garden*
- *DIY Solutions for the Garden*
- *How to Start a Vegetable Garden – How to Grow Vegetables*
- *5 Natural Pest Remedies for Your Garden*
- *Medicinal Herb Garden – What To Grow and How To Keep It Growing All Winter*
- *How to Make Your Own Compost Tea*