Quick & Simple Gardening Tips

In the world of gardening, there are plenty of great resources available to both new and experienced gardeners alike.

There are many classes, e-guides, various books, videos, magazines, and other resources available. This ebook is filled with tips which contain some of the best advice for helping a good gardener become a great gardener.

Improve the health of your soil before you plant your crops and seed.

Three or four weeks beforehand use organic compounds like mulch, fertilizer, and compost to increase the nutrient value and retention of your soil.

It will also improve the retention of water, create a soil buffer, and more.

Use mulch to add nutrients to your soil. Mulch is a much better way to amend your soil than fertilizers because it comes from natural ingredients in your garden. Commercial fertilizers may contain undesirable chemicals. In addition, mulch is free. All you need to do is compost your clippings and yard waste in a compost bin. Before long, you will have enough mulch for your entire garden.

Before planting anything, clean the area where you plan on having flowers or any other delicate plants. Remove all the weeds and the grass if you think it is necessary. Your flowers should not have any competitors for the nutrients they need while they grow.

Having a color-themed flower garden is a beautiful way to display bold color with different flower varieties.

Single-color beds, like the color white, makes an impact when set among deep green background plantings.

It may not be necessary to plant extra greenery to contrast against the white

flowers around your bed. A green lawn may be all you need to display the color.

To make sure you don't harm your plants when you water them, try use water at a lukewarm temperature. Cold water can shock your plants, making it more difficult to absorb the water properly.

Try filling your watering can before you go to bed at night so that it'll be the perfect temperature when you're ready to water your plants in the morning.

Alfalfa meal can be a great fertilizer for many gardens. This is a natural fertilizer and can be readily purchased at most health food stores. It provides essential nutrients to your plants, while letting you avoid harmful chemicals. You can buy Alfalfa meal from Amazon.com.

Apply the alfalfa meal directly over your soil. Reapply after any heavy rain falls.

Here's a YouTube video which pitches a product but does show you how to use soil to plant plants.

If you are not a fan of wearing gloves when gardening but still hate dirty fingernails, try scraping your fingernails in a bar of soap prior to beginning. The soap will keep soil from entering underneath your nails, plus the soap will help keep your nails from cracking or breaking.

When growing potatoes, make sure you choose a variety with a starch content that corresponds with the way you'll be cooking them. The more starch there is in a potato, the drier and flakier it will be when cooked.

Potatoes that are good for mashing have approximately 7% starch. These potatoes cook quickly and retain a high moisture content, so they're easy to mash. Baking potatoes have a starch content between 15% and 18%, and frying potatoes have the highest level at 22%.

Hold off having a pond in your garden until your children are older - well that's my opinion anyway.

A pond, no matter how shallow, can be very dangerous for small children.

If you start off with a sunken sandpit for your toddlers to play in, you can easily convert it into a garden pond when they are older.

Simply line the area with a rubber pond liner or use a preformed pond.

Test your soil before purchasing fertilizer.

Fertilizers provide essential nutrients to plants, such as phosphorus, potassium and nitrogen. However, fertilizers can be very expensive.

By testing your garden soil to see which nutrients it is lacking, you can avoid spending extra money on a complex fertilizer, and instead purchase a fertilizer containing only the nutrients that your soil requires.

Create a Zen Garden by adding a water feature...

Water features come in all sizes and designs. It is possible to have a very small water feature that is suitable for a patio or a very large pond. Several manufacturers make do-it-yourself kits that can be installed in just a few hours.

If your favorite flower pot or garden container has a hole or crack where dirt is leaking through, try lining that area inside the pot with a coffee filter.

It works great to hold dirt in and keep your walkways and container gardens neat and clean.

Try them out on hanging baskets as well!

Choose specific plants for dry soil.

Light and sandy soils have some advantages, such as they warm up quickly in the springtime and drain well after wet weather.

The downside is they can quickly become very dry in the summer and plants have to work hard to extract enough moisture to survive. Certain plants are very tolerant of dry conditions as long as they are given a helping hand when young.

Once established they do well with very little water, though. These plants include alyssum, cosmos, hebe, lavender, rosemary, sedum and veronica.

You can use small clay pots or milk jugs to protect your plants from a late season frost.

A bed sheet is also an effective cover on shrubs or large areas.

Typically, young sprouts are the most vulnerable. If you forget or your efforts fail, you may be forced to replant the crop.

A garden that has tall plants in the back with low-growing plants in the front shows off the entire flower bed the best. To keep

interest and color in your garden throughout the season, be sure to plant flowers that come into bloom at different times. This way, you will always enjoy color in your garden.

Check for weeds often in your garden as they will leech nutrients from the soil.

Weeds can grow at a high rate of speed and overwhelm the resources available to your plants. Take the time to check for weeds at least twice a week to catch them while they are new shoots. Here's a YouTube video with some tips.

It is important to treat roses before they are attracted by bugs.

There are insecticides that you can purchase at any garden supply store that should eliminate or deter bugs from attacking your rose bushes. It is best to treat the bushes before there are any signs of a bug problem.

Knowing the layout of your yard and what kind of soil you have can greatly improve your gardening experience. By knowing this, you can figure out what seeds will work with your current yard or if you need to create a different environment around your planting preferences. Different plants require different nutrients, so plan accordingly.

Grow shade-loving annuals.

Most annuals (and tender perennials) thrive in full sun, but some prefer a little shade. They do well on the north side of a house or under the canopy of trees and shrubs. Remember to provide good soil and plenty of moisture.

For constant bloom in a shady area, plant impatiens, balsam, clarkia and lobelia. Nicotiana is particularly striking, growing 5 feet tall, and producing beautiful tubular white (and purple) flowers with a glorious fragrance.

If having a lot of color in your garden is what you like but you want a sense of continuity, the best way to achieve this effect is to use two colors consistently among all of your plantings.

As you look at your garden, your eyes will be drawn to the continuity of color and the view will feel more harmonized to the senses.

Try growing a shade garden.

Shade gardens use less water, require less light, and are generally lower maintenance than gardens in the sun. They typically have less invasive weeds than other gardens and have a slower growing period as well. Your yard will be a more rounded environment with a garden like this.

Know your climate zone.

This can be the difference between a thriving garden and one that never grows. Knowing your climate zone will help you choose flowers, fruits, vegetables and trees that are perfect for where you are. This way, you get a bit of a head start when designing a garden.

When buying a shade tree, buy a smaller seedling that has been grown in a pot. Buying a larger tree seems like a better idea, but it has to be dug out of the ground. This damages the root system of the tree, so it spends its first growing years replacing those roots. The potted seedling, however, can immediately start growing new leaves and branches.

Save toilet paper tubes and use them to grow seedlings.

Simply slit the bottom of the tube several times and fold the flaps over to make a small pod in which to start your seeds.

When it's time to transplant your seedlings, you can peel away the tube or plant it and put the whole thing in the ground. The paper should decompose.

Make a profit off of the garden by selling micro crops.

There is a huge demand for micro crops from restaurants and organic markets who are willing to pay a premium for these fresh vegetables.

Specialty mushrooms, baby corn, rare herbs and other micro crops are in very high demand and can earn a gardener upwards of fifty dollars a pound or more.

Wear comfortable shoes and clothing when gardening.

Never work in the garden in bare feet or sandals.

Wear shoes that lace up and give good cushioning and arch support. If it is hot and sunny out, wear a hat to shade from the sun and clothes that will protect the skin from burning. The more comfortable you are, the more you will enjoy your garden.

Pick the right location for each of your plants.

This tip might seem obvious, but I've seen so many people just buy a plant and never think about how much sun (or shade) it needs to thrive.

Some plants love sun and others need more shade. By picking the location that works best for each of your garden additions, you will spend less time and money trying to maintain them. Don't be afraid to ask questions at your favorite garden store if you aren't sure what to plant, and where.

Stress Relief

Gardening can be a great way to relieve stress. If you're feeling stressed and you like gardening, doing it more often might make you feel more relaxed as you are outside and working with different kinds of plants as well as the earth. It also helps clear your mind and gets you focused.

One way to slowly-water your plant is by using a plastic bottle, such as a 2-liter soda bottle.

Punch a few small holes in the bottom of the bottle, fill it to the neck with water and replace the cap.

Place it in the soil and use the cap to regulate the flow of water.

Before planting anything, clean up as much as possible the area where you plan on having flowers or any other delicate plants. Remove all the weeds and the grass if you think it is necessary. Your flowers should not have any competitors for the nutrients they need while they grow.

If you do not have a lot of square footage for gardening, try using trellises or posts in your garden.

Allowing certain vegetables to grow up a trellis or post rather than spreading out along the ground will allow you to grow more per square foot.

You can do this with tomatoes, peas, and climbing beans, for example.

It is obvious that plants require water to grow. It's also important to know the amount of water that particular plants actually need. Overwatering or under-watering a plant can severely damage its growth and health. Overwatering can result in root rot, where the water-filled environment encourages the growth of microbes that eat away at the roots. Under-watering a plant can make it's leaves dry and brittle.

Use scale, color and texture in your garden to improve interest.

Use plants of different heights, putting small ones in front and tall ones in the back.

Add a few plants that have deep maroon leaves (**pictured**), which looks great next to greenery. Plant a tree or shrub that changes to oranges and golds in autumn, and mix small-leafed plants with larger-leafed or spiky plants, such as agave.

The fall season has arrived and the task of emptying our container gardens is at task. However, instead of storing your clay pots in a garden shed for the winter season, why not replace the summer annuals with edible fall vegetables.

Having in your favorite clay pot signifies fall, however, consider adding alternative edible plants like leafy lettuces such as arugula, endive, bok choy (**pictured**) and radicchio.

When it is time for a quick salad, simply snip a few leaves, and you will instantly have delicious ready to eat salad.

Use organic matter in your garden.

When you remove a plant, fill in the soil with organic matter so that the soil can renew itself quickly. You can use a small quantity of organic matter if you notice that some of your plants do not look healthy or to prepare the soil at the beginning of a new season.

Keep an eye on your lilies.

Unfortunately, lilies are prone to virus disease, such as lily mosaic. If you can, purchase bulbs that are guaranteed 'virus-free'.

During the growing season, keep a sharp look out for any aphids (**pictured**), as they spread the disease.

Make sure to spray with insecticide soap at the very first sign of them.

Utilize proper tools and keep them in tip-top shape to lessen the stress on your body when you're gardening.

Spades and hoes should be periodically sharpened to keep them working at their best. If you have the space, choose tools such as long handled spades that allow you to stand while working. The better you feel after gardening, the more often you'll enjoy getting your hands dirty!

When lifting heavy things in your garden it is important to protect your back. You should always lift with your knees when you are lifting anything in the garden. If something is very heavy you should ask someone to help you lift it so that you do not cause damage to your back or knees.

To prevent pain in your knees while gardening you should use a knee pad.

A knee pad is typically a foam board that will allow your knees to rest on padding rather than on the ground. You will find that most of the knee pads that are sold in stores are less than $10 and can be purchased anywhere that gardening supplies are sold or online.

You must water your plants correctly to achieve success with your garden. When watering your garden and if you live in a hot area, always try to do it early in the morning or in the evening, when the sun has gone down. This gives the soil a chance to actually soak up the water without it evaporating.

Also, if you have pots, try to hand water them with a can rather than using a hose. This way you can make sure that each pot gets enough water, since potted plants can dry out completely in a matter of hours if they haven't had a deep watering.

If your home just has a small patio, you can still have a garden by growing plants in containers.

Container gardening can give you the option to grow all kinds of flowers, plants, and even vegetables. You can also bypass the problem of frost by taking your containers inside during frosty weather.

Planting a garden is a great way to save on food costs.

Anyone can grow vegetables with a little bit of planning and maintenance. Involve your children with the garden, it is a good opportunity for them to learn a little science and you may even be able to get them to try new vegetables.

Take the time to plant your roses properly and you'll enjoy greater success down the road. Dig a hole larger enough to easily accommodate the roots and enrich it with organic matter.

Build a mound of soil in the hole and drape the roots over it. Fill half way and water to remove any air bubble, then finish filling the hole.

You can also create a neat effect by using a trellis for roses.

You can get most of the gardening tools you need second-hand. Visit yard sales and estate sales near you to look for gardening tools at a very low price. You can also visit online trading or donation groups to trade items you have for gardening tools, or even to find free tools on Craigslist.

Buying plants locally is a good option.

While it's possible to obtain plants from all over the country via mail-order, buying locally has its advantages. Not only will you be sure that the plants are suitable for your area, you will actually be able to see the plants before you buy them. Find a local nursery or garden center with knowledgeable staff who will be able to help you with plant selection. Many local nurseries have a 'money-back' guarantee if the plant fails to flourish in your garden.

If you want to grow roses, you should look into the different species. If you are a beginner, select a kind of rose that does not require a lot of maintenance.

You can also get into competitions with extremely delicate roses. Make sure you choose roses that are adapted to your skills and experience.

There are many common household items that can be used to good effect in the garden.

Try using duct tape to remove aphids from the leaves of infested plants. Wrap the tape around your hand, sticky side out, and press it to the leaves to remove the aphids.

A lint roller can be used for this tasks as well.

Pine needles are an optimal mulch for acid-hungry plants.

As you are mulching these plants during the fall season, you can use pine needles, which will begin to decompose and deposit acid into the soil at higher levels than other types of mulch, thus giving these acid-hungry plants plenty of what they need.

Repel leaf-eating insects with chili pepper.

If your plants' foliage is being ravaged by hungry insects, add one tablespoon of red chili pepper or hot mustard to one quart of water in a spray bottle. Spray the foliage evenly, making sure to get the undersides of the leaves too. One taste of this spicy spray will send bugs on their way.

Pumpkins

If frost has killed your pumpkins before they've had a chance to turn orange, it's not too late to save them. Cut the pumpkins off the vine, leaving a minimum of 4 inches of the vine on the top of the pumpkin.

Wash them thoroughly with water mixed with a small amount of bleach to prevent the development of mold.

Bring them inside and place them in a warm sunny location, turning them occasionally so the sun can reach all the green areas of the pumpkin.

Within a few weeks or less, you'll have bright orange pumpkins to carve into jack-o-lanterns or use to make homemade pumpkin pie.

If you have a garden pond, grow water lilies.

Many people are under the impression that water lilies are very hard to grow, but it's the exact opposite!

The roots of the plant embed themselves in the mud at the bottom of a pond.

From these roots grows a thick root stock which is topped with the leaves and flowers that you see on the surface of

the pond. You can also plant the water lily in a special pond basket. Simply line the basket with hessian to prevent the soil from falling through, and fill with ordinary garden soil. Rest the plant on top of the soil and place in your pond. The only requirement for beautiful flowers is a sunny position.

To make nutrient fertilizer from stuff you have around the house, look at what you have for breakfast.

Both old coffee grounds and tea bags make an excellent fertilizer, especially when it comes to plants that love acid.

Eggshells add alkaline to your soil, and bananas are the best source of the potassium that roses thrive on.

Avoid rose mildew.

This fungus affects many types of roses, especially in wet weather when days are warm and nights are cold.

Small gray or white spots will appear on the plant, forming a felt-like down. Shoot tips are killed and buds fail to open. Don't plant roses close together - they need good air circulation to avoid mildew. Spray any affected plants with fungicidal soap.

Don't assume that insects are to blame for all plants ailments.

There are many things that can affect the health of a plant:

- the PH of the water you are using
- the location of the plant (under shade vs direct sun)

- the amount of soil in the pot and several other reasons can be a determining factor

To kill off aphids on rose plants, spray them with a powdered milk and water mixture (1/3 cup powdered milk to one quart water). When the mixture is sprayed, the aphids get caught in the liquid and eventually die. Every few weeks spray down the roses with water to rinse off the mixture and reapply it if needed.

Recycled newspaper can be used in the garden.

Newspapers are an eco-friendly addition to your garden that can keep weeds at bay and help your soil retain important moisture. Simply wet some newspaper and place it around the bases of your garden plants. Click here to see what the people did who own the garden above.

I suggest also sprinkling the newspaper with soil to ensure the paper does not blow away (or use some rocks). The paper will smother any weed seedlings trying to emerge and help the soil hold onto its moisture.

Don't plant your seedlings or young plants too deeply.

The top of a root ball of a large shrub or tree seedling should be just above the soil level and then covered up with mulch to protect it. This allows the roots to breathe and keeps the tree or shrub healthy.

Here's a YouTube video showing you how to plant a root ball tree.

As I said earlier, used tea and coffee grounds make good soil enrichers. Both coffee and tea grounds are great additions when you need to raise the acidity of your soil.

If your soil is pH balanced, adding the tea and coffee is good--as flowers such as rhododendrons and azaleas and fruits, such as blueberry, appreciate soil that is on the acidic side. You can work the grounds into the soil before you plant your garden or sprinkle a little around existing plants once a week or so.

Don't try to remove low lying weeds by hand. Instead get a small shovel and flip them over so their leaves are under the dirt. You will kill the weed and the leaves will rot creating a fresh mulch like material for you to use. It is green and nourishing for the other plants.

A great tip to consider when gardening is that you can stop jamming from occurring with your string trimmer simply by spraying it with cooking spray or vegetable oil before loading it. This is an easy way to prevent frustration and wasted time in the future, trust me... been there, done that.

Spraying Chemicals

It is important to spray chemicals when it is **not** windy outside.

Wind can cause chemicals to get into your eyes or cause you to inhale them. There are some chemicals that can be very harmful if ingested. By only applying sprayed chemicals on windless days you can help protect yourself from accidental ingestion.

Saving Seeds for Next Year

(Click the Video Above To Watch)

Save money by drying the seeds from your annuals to plant next year. Petunias, zinnias and impatiens are just a few of the flowers from which it is easy to extract and save seeds. You will have to extract the seed pod from some flowers and wait for it to split open.

With others, such as marigolds, you will have to open the flower and extract the seeds yourself.

After extracting the seeds, let them dry for at least a week. Place them in a jar with a rubber seal and add silica gel pouches to keep them from absorbing moisture. Store them in a cool, dry location until you're ready to plant them next year.

Growing and planting seeds successfully...

Make a small hole in the soil with a chopstick and drop three seeds in. When the seedlings emerge, snips off the weaker sprouts leaving only the strongest plant

Wait 4 to 5 weeks before transplanting. Wait until the weather is not so cold at night, as a sudden cold snap will kill most seedlings.

Here's a good video and alternate way to do it.

Pruning Bushes

To make sure you're getting a level edge when pruning your bushes, use a piece of rope or a line.

Simply fasten the rope to two pieces at the approximate height you'd like the bush to be at. Seeing the bush along this straight line will make it easy to see if it's level at a glance.

Prune shrubs in early spring.

The best time of year to prune shrubs is in late winter or early spring, before any leaves or flowers grow. Pruning scars tend to heal quickly in early spring and early pruning allows you to look at the framework of the shrub before it is covered in leaves.

Remove all dead and broken branches and weak growth. This initial pruning is all that is really necessary apart from a little shaping (see above).

Disbud your plants.

Disbudding is the method of 'pinching out' new growth buds to encourage bushier growth and showier flowers.

New buds are produced at the leaf axil (where the stem and leaf stalk are attached).

By pinching out the top buds, you will encourage the lower buds to grow more freely. This also ensures that the plant has a much longer growing season.

Some plants that benefit from disbudding include:

- sweet pea
- carnation
- fuchsia
- aster
- marigold

Fresh Corn

(Click the image above to watch a video on planting corn)

You can enjoy fresh corn from your garden for an extended time during the summer by making several plantings.

About a week after you plant your first few rows, make another planting of a few more rows. As the harvest from your first planting begins to dwindle, your next planting will be nearing maturity.

Depending on the length of the summer season in your area, you might be able to make several plantings.

When planting next season's vegetable garden, it is important to rotate some of the crops. For example, potatoes and tomatoes should be planted in a different spot because they are both prone to the same diseases. Keep your vegetable garden healthy and thriving by learning which crops need rotating and why.

An Unusual Tip...

As funny as it sounds, you can dry herbs by putting them in your car.

You can neatly arrange them on a sheet of newspaper in a single layer and then close the doors and windows and let it air dry. The warmth in the car will dry the herbs quickly. The herbs themselves will create a very nice aroma.

Grow a herb garden.

You can buy packaged herbs, but it's much more economical to grow your own, at least in my case.

Grow them where they are easy to pick, such as in a garden bed near your back door, in pots on the patio, or in a kitchen window box.

Herbs require plenty of sun and good soil.

Moisture requirements depend on the variety of herb. Herbs that are easy to grow include:

- chives
- parsley
- sweet basil
- sage

- thyme
- rosemary

Humus

You can use humus as a basic component of your garden soil; it'll help your plants thrive. Humus is made up of decaying organic matter and is just about the perfect soil for most plants to grow in.

It improves the soil structure and water retention in the soil which promotes the habitation of earthworms and beneficial bacteria in the soil.

What To Do With That Old Christmas Tree

Instead of throwing your Christmas tree away at the end of the season, break it down and use the needles as mulch for your garden.

Planning

Plan out where you will plant certain vegetables in your garden before planting them. You need to know how tall and how wide certain plants get so that you can avoid overcrowding your plants.

Knowing ahead of time what you can expect from your plants will also help you place them far enough apart so that you can walk between them easily if necessary.

If you're a serious gardener, collect your dirt for a soil analysis to see the nutrients your soil needs. You can get this tested at a local university's agriculture department, usually for a fee. The fee is well worth it usually because then you will know what nutrients your dirt needs to have a garden that is successful.

If you like to plant flowers that produce a lot of fragrance, consider planting them close to your house. One reason is that you can enjoy the scent whether you are inside or outside your house. Another reason is that the heat from the walls of your house can intensify the scent from your flowers, making them more fragrant.

Use a mixture of vinegar, rubbing alcohol, and water to get rid of salt deposits.

If you are having a problem of salt buildup on your clay pots, mix equal parts white vinegar, rubbing alcohol and water in a spray bottle.

Spray on the deposits and they will wash away with ease. Make sure to let the pots dry thoroughly before use.

To give your plant great nutrition without spending a lot of money, use leaves! Leaves are one of the best plant foods available. Try covering any exposed soil in your garden with small, shredded leaves. This will enrich the soil and will allow it to provide better nutrition to your plants.

Plant self-seeding flowers.

Let your flowers do the work of re-stocking the garden for you. If you allow your flowers to go to seed, the following year you will have new seedlings popping up everywhere. If things get too crowded or if plants appear in the wrong place, simply thin them out. Good self-seeders are:

- alyssum
- bellflower
- forget-me-not
- poppy
- columbine

Sometimes you will need to re-pot your plants.

One good way to check if your plants need re-potted is to turn them over and look at the bottom. If you see many roots, it is time to get it into a new pot. If you see few roots, you may not need to disturb the plant.

Snails and Slugs

To help keep slugs and snails out of your garden, minimize any moist, cool spots you may have. Wood piles and empty flower pots can provide shade to these

pests. They need a shady cool spot to survive, so if you eliminate such places in your garden, the slugs and snails will eventually wander somewhere else.

Pick garden vegetables often and early.

While immature, many types of vegetables are very tasty in their young phase. Snap peas, little summer squash, cucumbers, and budding broccoli can be picked to keep the plants in a state of reproduction for a longer period of time. This will also increase yields with a second harvest off of the same plants.

If you find that your garden is producing more vegetables than you can eat, you might try finding recipes that call for the produce in different stages of maturity. For example, if you anticipate that you'll have more squash than you need, you can harvest the squash blossoms. This makes your garden more diverse in its offerings that you can enjoy.

Gardening can be a relaxing and rewarding hobby, while encouraging you to go outside and be familiar with the planet. Gardening is an excellent way to get your family together, too.

That about wraps it up for this quick tips book. Hopefully you've found some tidbits of information in here to help make your gardening experience more successful.

Copyright and Affiliate Links Notice

This ebook is copyrighted. Please do not share, sell, copy, or reprint this ebook. I'm not a big lawyer guy so this copyright notice is a bit informal, however please understand that this book is for your personal use only.

Also, this ebook contains a number of affiliate links which means if you click the link and purchase a product from the site which is linked to, the person who wrote this ebook will make a small commission.

Thanks and I hope you enjoyed reading it.