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Gardening Organically

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Table of Contents

What is Organic Gardening

Organic Butterfly Garden

Pest Control

Organic Vegetables

Children and Organics

Soil Preparation

A Water Garden

Organic Roses

The Proper Placement

Container Gardening

Organic Composting

The Weather

The Farmers Market

Raised Bed Organics

Tools, Equipment and Resources

What is Organic Gardening

What Does Organic Gardening Mean?

Conventional wisdom says that organic gardening is a simple process wherein one just plants seeds and for it to grow to its potential, fertilizers are put around the area and pesticides are used to brush off annoying insects that may storm the garden. However, organic gardening is more than a step-by-step process; it is a science and even an art by itself, with myriad ways to let the plant flourish and it is always scrutinized by millions of scientists around the world to ensure safety and efficiency of the gardens growth.

Also, common wisdom says that organic gardening simply involves a plough and a rake. In fact, it can be as high-tech as the newly released cellular phone. This agricultural art utilizes many things like rotary tillers, synthesized fertilizers and even biodegradable pesticides. With all the wonderful inventions for gardening, it seems as if its possibilities for growth are limitless and the dream of the disappearance of famine and hunger will soon be reachable.

The Basics

Of course, you have to be in touch with the fundamentals of organic gardening to fully take advantage and properly use the new agricultural technology products and methods when they finally come to the market and the gardening community, respectively.

First of all, you have to know how build the soil to make it as accommodating to the plant as possible. There are many substances that include this, namely: mulches, cover crops, manure, compost, and ground-rock mineral supplements. With this in your soil-nurturing kit, it will be a cinch to cultivate your plants and make your garden as beautiful as possible by using natural and/or organic methods.

Protection

But even though the soil is perfect for the plants, you cannot ensure that the plant won't be harmed as it grows. Insects always lurk around plants and your garden is no exception.

Many natural methods are available to prevent this predicament. You can avoid the threat of bugs by pheromone traps, insecticide soaps and many others that are favorites of organic horticulturists.

The Shades of Organic Horticulture

Second, you just cannot dive in into the world of organic gardening without doing your homework. It is a broad science, with each subject that branches out of it all contributing to the complex yet fulfilling world of organic horticulture. There are five schools of thought about organic horticulture.

The first is floriculture, which obviously means the cultivation of flora in your garden and the secrets, skills and knowledge required to maintain it. The science of knowing how to market these floras for your business is also included in this school of thought.

The second area of study is olericulture, where one learns how to cultivate and protect vegetables, which are very fragile vis-à-vis the pests that may exist in your garden.

Third is pomology, where the type of plants involved are fruits, the ones highly targeted by insects because of their edibility and their natural usage of giving life onto the garden, which basically means it has the necessary minerals and nutrients to carry that on.

Next is landscape horticulture, where one gets to design creative and captivating landscapes for the garden not only to attract people to it. But also provide the perfect backdrop for landscape plants.

And the last area of study in organic horticulture is post harvest physiology, which involves keeping the soil fresh for future usage and for the gardens general maintenance. Also, this is the school of thought wherein one gets to learn how to prevent spoilage from current horticultural crops. With these five areas of study mastered and put under your belt, you are sure to carry them all out and make the best garden possible.

With all these said, one can be an exceptional gardener with a little interest tucked in and a lot of perseverance carried over to create the best garden possible. All one has to do is to study the basics of organic gardening, which is

knowing the soil, learning how to protect the plants and mastering the intricacies and needs of certain types of plants.

Organic Butterfly Garden

Creating an Organic Butterfly Garden

There's always that little girl inside every woman who just adores butterflies fluttering around a wonderful garden full of delicate flowers, all just starting to bloom under the morning light. But creating ones requires a lot of work and a little bit of patience, since attracting butterflies is no easy task. You have to research thoroughly and think creatively so the butterflies will be attracted to your garden and consider it as a newfound home.

A Basic Rule

The basics of creating an organic butterfly garden is pretty easy because you only have to do one important thing, which is to plant a lot of flowers. If you love a variety of butterflies to visit your garden, then you need to diversify your

plant choices, all encompassing the correct taxonomy. You may also have to put a water area or two to make it look and seem more livable for these insects. But these are mainly the basics. Planning is a different story if you want more than just a crowded garden full of random butterflies.

Planning

Even though the average human simply adores wonderful aesthetics and design coupled with beautiful butterflies fluttering across worthy flora, the existence of design doesn't really matter to these delicate creatures. Where can you find a butterfly that avoids a bountiful garden just because it isn't her type? In dreamland, of course. So to speak, if you're just a beginner trying out a new hobby and it happens to involve creating a butterfly garden, then don't introduce too much added stress in your life. Take it easy and focus on the basics, which is put a lot of flowers in your garden coupled with water areas in strategic areas.

So with that said, do plant a lot of flowers because this is the natural target for butterflies and also put up some pretty butterfly houses along with water areas not only to make it more accommodating to the butterfly, but also make the

garden very attractive to both butterflies and people.

Envision the Garden

But also, you have to take into account the overall layout of the butterfly garden. What size is good enough for the house and also for the butterflies? What are the species that exist within the area of your home? Take those two questions to heart before planting flowers.

Butterflies, as studies have shown, are receptive to specific types of flowers. So if you want a particular type of species living in your garden, then choose wisely and create an area to its liking and plant its favorite flower. Make sure that you don't focus entirely on the butterflies but also yourself. Pick out your favorites from the myriad of species out there and adjust the size so that both the butterflies and your demands are met. Stamp the notion that balance should be achieved in your garden so at the end of the day, not only the butterflies but you, the gardener, will also be pleased.

Once you have thought of the species and correct balance for your garden, do

take into account color coordination in your flower beds. This is important because not only will a specific type of butterfly visit your garden and probably live there, it will also be beneficial aesthetically because your garden won't look like a rather weird and murky place with colors that rival the things drug addicts see. As the old adage goes, keep it simple and streamlined, and you're good to go.

Good advice when you're still in the planning stage is to deftly sketch the area on paper. Seeing everything in a tangible object makes things a lot easier and helps one refocus to the goal at hand. Don't just sketch, also color it out so as you can create an overall theme to your butterfly garden.

Do you want your garden to seem cool and calm? Then place flowers with cool colors like blue and purple so as to soothe the senses. You may also sprinkle some white flowers in the background to make it look clean and serene. It's all up to you, and you can help realize that by simply creating a draft for the garden's layout.

You may get closer to the garden of your dreams with these tips to make the most accommodating and attractive butterfly garden in your area. Make sure that you do your homework and know the types of flowers that specific species of butterflies are attracted to. Is the flower Milkweed a good choice? Or are

Daisies and Sunflowers better? Those are the types of decisions you have to make when planning your butterfly garden. Sketch your future garden and put the butterfly's favorite plant in it so you create the perfect garden to make that little girl innocently hiding inside you smile.

Pest Control

Pest Control and Organic Gardening

Man-made pesticides have been thoroughly disrupting our environment since World War II. While it may be true that the concept did succeed in its first few decades, in time their chemicals not only made tougher and more resistant bugs, it has also poisoned a lot of plants that fell victim to the chemical-enriched sprays that hogged the plants air.

Nowadays, people are finally making it a point to consider alternatives, especially organic pesticides, in order to curb this recurring problem. There are a few countries in the world that put a step forward in the elimination of synthetic pesticides by outlawing them, an example of which is The Virgin

Islands, and have promoted incessantly the hidden advantages and new techniques of organic gardening.

Why are Synthetic Pesticides Bad?

While it may thoroughly kill the pests that may hound all plants, big and small, it has slowly strengthened these pests into freakish super-bugs. Let me explain. The main feature of insects that have been overlooked by our ancestors is that they have short life spans and they can multiply at powerful degrees, making swarms in a blink of an eye. That means that their evolution is faster than humans, who have long life spans and take a little longer to evolve. With that in place, the select few that could have survived the pesticide blast may mate with another bug and create an offspring that has inherited that pesticide-repelling gene. And since life spans are short, these bugs keep mating until they make a powerful swarm that enables them to get to their goal, which is eating up the plants, without them getting hurt by pesticides. This is the conundrum that the contemporary farmer must face. The old pesticides don't work as effectively as before, and new ones will only make them stronger in the long run.

This is only the first and most important problem of synthetic pesticides.

Another problem that this kind of pesticide causes is that they may poison the plants and even us if we partake in pesticide-drowned plants. Just think about it: what are the chemicals in pesticides? Of course, the chemicals involved are the ones that can kill bugs and potentially humans. Even though it only hurts us in rather trivial degrees, a large amount of which can hurt us if we eat and eat the same chemical-blasted plant again and again.

In a nutshell, synthetic pesticides may seem beneficial for us in the short run, but if we look forward to the generation of our children, we will see a huge problem that threatens our food supply and more importantly, our existence.

Natural Strategies to Fight off Pests

There are a lot of wily strategies that farmers use to tackle the recurring problem of pests without threatening the human race in the long run. And that is using Mother Nature's old methods to outsmart and outmuscle these pests.

The first one is cultural control; this is the process where the farmer does the little things to avoid pests potentially living in their garden. One may remove diseased plant material and cutting off weeds and plentiful plant debris that may potentially be used as a home by insects. The farmer must also remove dead plants and corn plant stumps to avoid the same predicament. Another wily method is planting specific plants in raised beds in the rainy season, making the pests attempt crossing at a miniature moat which will likely kill them if they tried. There is also the option of rotating crops time and time again to different locations so that the problem of soil insects and disease build-up will be minimized. This requires a lot of planning and may stress out the average farmer, but crop rotation is the most effective method around.

Natural Weapons

Another method is using Mother Natures natural poisons. It has been said again and again by farmers that if it is natural, then it is safe. The most deadly poisons present in nature are actually the ones found in certain plants. You have to be careful when handling these poisons because it may hurt them too. So use them carefully, but use it without impunity against those annoying pests. Common poisons found in plants are Nicotine, Pyrethrum, Rotenone and Ryania.

And another effective method is Biological Control, where one utilizes natural predators to prey on pests to keep their population down. But don't forget to maintain that natural balance by also finding some animals that prey on these pest-munching predators. It's a bit complicated, but a little remedial lesson of the life cycle won't hurt.

Don't sway into the pitches of salesmen saying that synthetic pesticides aren't only effective, but also take the hassle out of farming. Please don't buy into that. History has proven that this kind of pesticide has created two major problems in our agriculture and has hurt the human race in many ways. Stick to the tried and tested methods and don't forget to use Mother Nature's weapons and humankind's ingenuity to curb this recurring problem in our gardens.

Organic Vegetables

Organic Vegetable Gardening

The rising prices today ranging from food to appliances, all due to the oil price

hike, have taken a toll on the contemporary middle-class family. There's a simple yet cost effective way to cut costs: create a simple vegetable garden. It may seem absurd, but with a vegetable garden, it will cut some costs in the long run and give you healthier eating.

Things You Need to Know First

Beautiful and successful vegetable gardens don't take a jiffy to complete. It takes a lot of perseverance and ingenuity not to mention weeks of planning, constant care and the sincere desire to make it happen. The thing about this is that it pays off given that it offers a lot more than simply some extra food on the table. You will experience a fresh atmosphere in your home and not to mention could bring in some supplemental income.

You must take into account that you must use organic gardening rather than a conventional one. This will benefit the garden in a myriad of ways and of course help avoid the risks involved with synthetic pesticides. The difference between these two is mainly based on fertilization and pest control. Using methods such as crop rotation and putting in some natural predators to fight off pests are a few examples that define the efficiency of organic gardening.

Plans

As with gardening in general, you have to plan everything out thoroughly so you can envision and turn your ideal garden into reality. You must consider the variables involved in creating a garden. First is the size of your family, so that you'll have a good idea on what amount you will have to plant. If you plan on creating a business out of the garden however, you should measure the demand for certain vegetables in your area and adjust accordingly. A little knowledge on Economics will help here.

In regards to the location of your garden, do some research and find a plant that matches the soil type of the area, and if you're lucky the soil might be good enough to accommodate more types of plants.

When you are designing the garden, it is important that you put proper spacing on top of customary aesthetic design to not only make the garden attractive, but also give enough leeway for the plants to thrive and grow.

Planting guides are available on the net to help you out in getting information about the leading varieties and the types of soil essential to grow those. Just surf away and you'll find the information you need.

Adding Organic Matter

One of the most important aspects of organic gardening is knowing what kind of organic material you should apply to the soil. It comes in a myriad of forms, from animal manures and cover crops to compost. Knowing how each changes the soil is integral to creating the perfect backdrop for the plants.

There are many benefits that come from adding organic matter to the soil. It improves a lot of things, the ability of the soil to hold water, nutrients and its buffering capacity.

With all the soaring prices that affects everything in the market, it becomes more and more important for one to be resourceful and become more self-sufficient. Creating a vegetable garden fulfills both of these things. It builds discipline not only for the gardener, but for their children as well. It also

opens doors for a business, helping you gain profit from selling certain vegetables to a rather picky market if you choose to do so.

Children and Organics

Organic Gardening and Your Children

As soon as that school bell rings on the last day of classes, kids just rush out of their rooms, excited of the freedom they experience once more and the new lessons they will learn in the summer months. But what activity should they spend time on in these three warm months?

Why not introduce them to the world of gardening? From preparing the soil, planting seeds, selecting the plants and finally watching them grow it is entertaining and educational for children because their curiosity is piqued and the wonders of nature revealed.

Plans

The planning phase for the organic garden is entirely different from a conventional one. The area should be substantially smaller than the one the gardener is used to. For a child as young as 2 to 4 years old, planting as few as a couple of tomatoes will be a wonderful new world for the child even though it seems so small and insignificant to the adult. You should remember not to overwhelm the child, but tease his/her imagination and let the child ponder on what's going to happen next, taking in every moment of the plants growth.

Not only will it be beneficial for kids, it also helps avoid weeds that may grow in the area since they only thrive in large spaces. These miniature vegetable gardens help in more ways than you could imagine.

Soil Preparation and Discovery

Soil preparation is arguably one of the most fun moments a child can have in gardening. Digging the ground with a rather large spoon thrills the child because not only is it a new experience, the child also gets to interact and have fun with the adult. After you've opened up a reasonably sized crevice on your garden, you should make the soil healthier by adding compost or peat. Teach

the child how these rather pungent and seemingly useless things contribute to the plants growth. This will help the child appreciate the balance of nature.

If you don't live in a suburb, where lawns are rather customary and commonplace, but in a townhouse or an apartment a small corner in a balcony is sufficient space for both the child and you to work. You'll be surprised by the fresh image of a bright-colored plant on your balcony when you see it at the break of day. Tomatoes are a good choice for a balcony plant given its fresh-looking nature. Peppers and beans also do well in small containers.

Adjust Accordingly for Older Children

If the child is older, say five to eight years old, you should extend the rather cramped garden with only two plants described upgraded to a more substantial one. More varieties should be in place, tomatoes, peppers, lettuce and many more. Don't forget to put some flowers along the side, making the garden as beautiful as possible for the child's admiration. A rule of making a garden for the child is to make the varieties as different as possible, making the garden multi-colored and enchanting as possible. Make sure that it entices all five senses, from sight to smell.

At this age, children aged from five to eight can grasp the more complex rules of organic farming, namely crop rotation and biological control. Seeing how the cycle of life takes place before their eyes is insightful and enchanting for a child that age. And seeing how some insects prey on pests that harm plants also give the kids a little more appreciation for bugs, seeing them in a better light as opposed to children who are used to seeing cockroaches getting squished relentlessly by their older brother.

Children learn faster when they use all their five senses, taking in everything that comes their way. Kids love it and giving them an experience that uses all that, while creating a parent-child bond that lasts reaps far-reaching benefits.

Organic gardening can also be a wonderful experience for the family, all playing a role in creating and designing the best garden possible. All it takes is a little research and a whole lot of dedication and support from the family. Relationships are strengthened by doing things together, and you can do that with your whole family.

Soil Preparation

Preparing the Soil for an Organic Garden

Soil preparation is one of the most important aspects of creating an organic garden. It affects everything in the garden, from germination rates and seed failure. So making a good bed for your plants is the single most important thing to make the best and most productive garden.

How to Prepare

There are a good number of conditions that must be fulfilled in order to insure that you have the perfect soil for your plants. First is that the soil particles must be small enough so there will be room for the roots to spread and the water to circulate. A good size such as 0.5 to 5 millimeters is perfect for this, a good metaphor of which is that the soil must be as small as rice. Moisture is also important in creating a soil bed because this signifies not only the ease that the plants roots will spread, but it also tells about amount of nutrients present in the soil. But do take into heart that too much of something is counterproductive, so a soil that is too moist won't work. To see if the soil is firm yet moist enough, see if it breaks down under the rain or not, this is a

good indicator of the soil particles size and the soils overall firmness.

Knowing the Soil Properties and Types

You should also analyze the soil properties. It should be rich in organic matter that could already be. However, most soils aren't as ideal as this, some with too much clay or loam. Make sure that you study the pH level so you'll have a general idea of the nutrient saturation rate in the soil. This shouldn't be done manually but rather with the help of a cheap soil testing kit from your neighborhood garden center.

After you've done all that and tested the soil and have seen some imbalances and/or discrepancies, just talk to the professional that's always available in garden center where you've bought your gardening kit. Don't forget, you don't learn anything if you doesn't ask!

After making the soil as accommodating as possible for growth, you should study the soil because each type, whether it loamy or sandy, brings unique challenges for the gardener. The latter could be too dry to incorporate fertilizers

at an early phase and loam soils could be difficult to break up for organic matter. Study the pros and cons of each and see what plants thrive in specific kinds of soils.

After these two general procedures, you should make the area a comfortable place for plants to grow, with distractions and pests almost non-existent; so clear out those weeds using forks, rakes or any other garden tool. Other obstructions such as rocks, stones and the like should also be removed.

Finishing Touches

Now, the soil is ready for some organic matter to help the plant grow. Of course, these should have been prepared beforehand from past seasons. Its very easy because all you have to do is collect all the remaining leaves, branches and snipped grass into one big heap and earthworms and the Earths decomposers will do the job and make it healthy compost for the soil.

After that, you can go back and work on the soil again. There will be some soil lumps present in certain areas so rake through it or stomp it down with a boot

to break it down. Cultivate the area deeply and if it is possible, put it down as low as 7-10cm. A good indicator is you can just push your finger through the soil. And when you're done with that, you can now remove some little stones that surround the area.

Preparing the soil isn't exactly a walk in the park. But its pretty doable and automatic when you get the hang of the intricacies involved. The most important aspect that you must take into heart is the soils nutrient content. If there's too little, then expect low germination rates. Everything else is merely supplemental to make the growth rates of your plants as good as possible. Just do what any gardener has to do and you'll be on your way to creating a good soil base for the garden of your dreams.

A Water Garden

How About an Organic Water Garden?

Water gardens have risen in popularity over the years, taking part in the scenery of modern America. They are one of the most refreshing benefits a

homeowner can have. The various animals that flutter or swim through the ponds and the charming lilies dotted across the pond surface are enchanting.

Designs are limitless for the water garden and the planting options are numerous. This type of garden is for keeps as it helps fix our rather imbalanced ecosystem, but to also paint the town light blue and green with its refreshing allure.

Basics

Of course, you cannot create a water garden without knowing the nuts and bolts behind it. The gardener should acquire enough knowledge so the plants will thrive.

The first thing you must settle when planning a water garden is its location. Nothing else matters because this determines the ecology of the garden and how much sunlight and traffic/exposure it will get. For the location, it should get around six hours of sunlight per day. That's the optimal amount of light it should get.

Second, you should be able to control the water garden in terms of what goes in the area. Ideally, it should be viewable by your bedroom window so you will spot any predators that may have jumped in the garden. With that, you will not only enjoy beautiful scenery every time you wake up, you will be able to scan the place for any unsolicited visitors and/or predators. That will be safe not only for the garden, but for the family as well.

Safety

Third, the garden shouldn't be located near utility services like sewage pipes. The obvious reason is that the roots that may spread from your garden may hamper development in the area, adding headaches for those installing/repairing it. You will also avoid some potential problems, namely those that could contaminate your garden with toxins and detergents. When you build your water garden, make sure that there are ample structural supports beneath it to avoid future problems.

Fourth, when thinking of the materials you should use when assembling the pond, there are a lot of options you could consider. If you have the skills to

handle it, then you may opt for fiber glass or concrete. But if you don't, you can opt for plastic or earthen to make everything easier. If you simply don't have the will to do this kind of work, there are tons of commercial firms that offer some advice not only on the nitty-gritty, but also on design, general aesthetics and maintenance.

Lastly, you must take to heart that creating a water garden isn't only time-intensive, but takes a load out of your cash too. Make sure that you have the financial and spiritual stability to take this on.

Water Quality

Whether your garden is just an unassuming giant bath tub or a wondrous paradise, you should remember that water quality is top priority when you are creating the best water garden possible. The thing about this is that it actually determines not only the level of beauty of the garden; it will also determine the lifespan of the aquatic life residing in the garden.

When choosing the type of water you will pour in the pool, don't opt for surface

water or the water from a river because these contain some possible contaminants such as lead and mercury, not to mention some fish that may hamper your ponds inherent ecosystem. If you opt for city water, the gardener should de-chlorinate it using some pellets used in de-chlorinating aquariums and the like.

With all these basics said, you will have a general idea on how to create a water garden. With the location and aesthetics planned and the structure realized, you have the perfect backdrop for the perfect garden, which now needs good quality water to finish the deal. When you do these things along with the tools of organic horticulture, then the best water garden possible will be realized.

Organic Roses

Roses and Organic Gardening

The Rose has enchanted many throughout the years, with its symbolic passion immortalized in many tales made throughout the years. Once you grow rose beds in your garden, then your world will be enchanted by its surreal beauty and charm. But behind its charming visage lies a hard but true fact: they have the reputation for being too fussy. But even though it has some considerable

flaws, you can do it with a little bit of help from us and organic gardening.

Essentially, you should take to heart that you may only choose one variety of rose for your garden, because each type of rose is only for a specific type of climate and zone. When you've finally chosen one, then you're now ready to tackle the requirements that will make a successful rose bed.

General Tips

You first must find a rose that can survive the climate of the area. Some, like the Tea rose can survive in hot areas but many others cannot. Do your research and find one that matches the area weather. Furthermore, a rule that is consistent with this is that the rose must also be resistant to any plant diseases that may plague the area. In a nutshell, your roses won't survive if they cannot withstand the pressures and demands of the area, so make sure you find the right variety.

Once you have decided the best rose for the area, you must be aware of its demands. Meaning, you should be aware of what type of soil it likes, what

frequency and/or saturation of water and so on. Do your homework and you'll know about the plant soon enough as you help it grow to its potential.

Roses and Organic Gardening

Next, you have to show off your organic gardening skills and present to yourself (and everyone) the benefits of using them. Put some compost around the area and some natural predators to ward off pests here and there. Using nature's own tools will help your roses flourish in the long run, so utilize them where you can.

After you have finished preparing the soil, test its pH balance to see that it has enough nutrients and if it's accommodating enough for the plant. An acidic pH of around 6 will suffice.

As you go about preparing the soil and testing its pH value, don't forget that roses need ample sunlight for them to grow fully. Remember that they need full sun in order to thrive, but do provide some limits in the afternoon if the weather in your area is warmer than the average.

Also provide some ample space for each plant so that it has enough space to breathe and grow. Just like humans, plants need their personal space.

Protection

To protect the plant from pests, don't rush into buying some pesticides to aid it. Rather, diversify your garden by putting different plants in so that no one pest will dominate and devour your roses. Some plants are resistant to some pests and adding some diversity into your garden will help pull down pest populations.

There are some special techniques in watering a plant, so follow them when you take care of your roses. One is that you should water the roots and do it deeply, giving it some well-deserved attention. If you care for the rose enough, it will give something in return: its majesty.

Again, roses are such beautiful plants and are the most popular one, with its legacy engraved in the halls of literature. But growing them is no easy task.

There are a lot of variables involved in growing roses and the gardener must take care of the plants according to this and must adjust to its specific demands. From its basic requirements, from weather demands to the plants specific requirements, know that cultivating these roses is no easy task.

Also, since roses are fragile and difficult to grow, you should protect it as much as possible with the help of organic farming. Diversify the plant base surrounding the rose to lower the possibility of pest infestations and add some natural predators to eat up potential prey. With all those rules followed, then you're on your way to a glorious rose garden.

The Proper Placement

Selecting the Proper Place for Your Organic Garden

Just like real estate, one of the most important aspects of organic gardening is to find the best location for it. Nothing matters more than this. This determines the future of your plant and nothing else is more important than this, even the soil quality. Because first things first: with demanding plants like roses,

location and the fluctuations of the weather must be tolerable so as to ensure growth.

Basic Tips

To find the prime location for the plant, the gardener must do some extensive research on that specific plant because it has different demands. Some plants prefer a cool weather while others a warm one. If your area is a bit congested by soot and pollution, find a plant that can persevere amidst all of the pain that it will go through. Find one that suits the requirements inevitably posed by your environment.

With the basic requirements accomplished, next you have to take into account the accessibility of the garden for both sunlight and your water sprinkler. The location should be open enough so as the plant will get some sunlight for half of the day while near enough so that you can give ample care and protection for it.

Check the Soil

With these things put in place, you must check the soils nutrient base by testing its pH. If its too basic, then it lacks nutrients. If its too acidic however, then you have to be wary still because it might harm your plant more than benefit it. The perfect ph for soil is around five to six.

After that's done, check for the availability of organic matter around the area. This will reduce the hassles of preparing one for your garden. Just look around and see if there are some compost heaps available from government grass cutters who just leave the snipped grass for them to degrade naturally. Just collect these, put them into a sack and there you have some ready organic matter, with a liter less of sweat.

Like it Business Style?

If you look at the garden as an opportunity to set up a business, then you have to find a place that has considerable traffic, such as a suburb. If you're fortunate enough to live in one, then you should consider starting up a business. Make sure that you attract people to your place using a lot of bright colored plants in your garden so as to pique some interest. Soon enough,

people will fall in line for your daisies, roses or sunflowers. Just remember to adhere to the basic rules of organic gardening while fulfilling the necessities when putting up the business: get a lot of traffic and make them talk about your products. Remember, a small business survives and thrives by public relations.

When do you find a place that gets considerable traffic from potential customers, you still have to do some research and see what kinds of plants do they prefer. Look around and see what flowers are they carrying or find ones that are desired but aren't sold or are sold too expensively by flower shops in malls. Survey your target audience and cater to their needs.

The main feature that makes your business better than the rest is the customers assurance that you have used organic materials. Customers nowadays are suspicious of popular flower chains that may have cultivated their flowers using harmful pesticides for the sole reason that production will be a lot quicker. When you market your products, stress that they are organic so as to let the audience know that you are a sincere flower shop with not only the customers interests in mind, but also the environment and subsequently, our children and the generations that come after them.

Location for your garden really does take a prime spot over anything else not only by the reasons of convenience. Finding the right place is beneficial for the plants growth and general health, with you studying the degree of sunlight the area gets and the quality of soil its in. And if you're planning on doing a business, location too is important because you want some potential customers walking along your yard, admiring your garden and putting a few bills in your wallet.

Container Gardening

Organic Gardening and Containers

Sometimes, gardeners don't have enough room in their yard or no yard at all to make a successful and subsequently beautiful organic garden. But don't despair; you can make an organic garden in a small space without the help of a spacious area. All you need is a container of any size and a pocket full of imagination. One has a slew of possible containers for the plant. You could use bathtubs and even those ubiquitous plastic containers. But knowing how to utilize them creatively will be the only way towards the goal of beauty epitomized in a little shell.

Benefits of A Garden in a Bottle

The main benefit of container gardening is the element of convenience that is inherent in it. You don't have to submit to the inevitabilities that come along with the fluctuations of weather, which could hammer down the plants with rain or kill it slowly by intense heat. The mobility that comes along with container gardening helps avoid that. When summer comes, the container should be outside, relishing the warmth that comes along with it. When its winter, however, you can still help the plant survive by putting it indoors, beside the kitchen or living room window.

Adding to the ease of maintaining the plant, it also adds some extra oomph to your living room or patio. Its bright colors will complement and brighten up the rather predictable interior of the house. Bring nature in your home and see it sprinkle the place with added freshness and pizzazz.

Along with these two, helping the plant survive is a million times easier. The fact that the presence of weeds will practically disappear and random pests such as snails, slugs and diseases that stem from soil will be at bay proves this

point. Furthermore, potting mediums are more convenient and a lot easier to manipulate since they provide the optimal pH for your plant.

How to Set it Up

First of all, you need to purchase premium soil for the plant so it will be lighter and also provide proper drainage. Make sure that the potting mix you purchase does not contain fertilizer or organic matter, so you have to put the necessary nutrients in the soil yourself. You may buy a separate fertilizer in the garden shop or make one yourself. Pay attention to the instructions because if you put too much fertilizer into the container, you'll burn the plants roots. There are numerous types of fertilizers that cater to specific plants so make sure you find the best one for the specific plant.

Watering the Plant

The most important thing the gardener must remember is that container plants need more watering than usual. That's because the plants that are in a garden benefit from numerous amounts of soil that hold the nutrients in water.

While the container on the other hand, usually doesn't hold up and drain continually as you water the plant. So water it frequently but not so much that you're virtually drowning the plant.

You should water the plant in a way that it is gentle on its stem and leaves. So sprinkle the plant with a soft flow that doesn't harm the plant in any way. In warmer conditions however, you have to water the plant more frequently, maybe do a little re-watering 45 minutes after your initial one, so you will ensure there is enough water held in the container.

There are many advantages and very few disadvantages that come with container gardening. The former are mainly convenience and mobility while the latter comes from the fact that it is simply too small to be admired. But for the busy bee, who has a busy schedule and deadlines to rush through, container gardening not only takes little of time, but the benefits that come with gardening in general, provide a fresh atmosphere.

Organic Composting

Compost and Organics

Gardens need compost to help them thrive in trying conditions, where the weather takes a toll on them. But you shouldn't really rely on compost that just lies around because that's not exactly the perfect one for your garden.

Why? There are a number of factors that these nature-made substances that don't fulfill the nutrients needed to help the garden be its best. First is that these random composts don't match the correct carbon-nitrogen ratio and water content. The main thing you have to understand about compost is that for it to be the ideal one, the decomposition that is inherent in this process must be controlled and stabilized by the gardener.

Definition

Contrary to the popular belief of what is compost, a smelly heap found at the edge of your garden isn't exactly the correct description for it. Rather, no pungent smell exists around the heap and there are no flies that fly around it.

The thing is that good compost is not just some decayed organic matter. It is much more complex than that, which has been discovered and developed by microbiology, all designed to benefit the everyday gardener and agriculture in general. There are a myriad of benefits if you put some compost in your soil. It kills weed seeds and suppresses pathogens that may invade the plant. Making and/or buying compost is absolutely essential.

Benefits

There are simply too many benefits for putting compost in your garden. With a good amount of the nutrients, namely nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, one is insured that compost improves the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of the soil.

Furthermore, compost buffers the soil, nullifying the effects of acid and alkaline that might be present, which means that the pH level of the soil will be at its correct and optimal rate for the plant. Also, compost alters the soil structure, making it less likely to erode and helps the soil hold in more nutrients for the plant. Lastly, compost has good bacteria that converts nitrogen to nutrients and also has a lot of beneficial insects, worms and

organisms in tow.

Lastly, compost pushes the limits of fertilizer and utilizes it well to aid the plant as much as possible. First, it helps release the nutrients slowly so as not to overwhelm the plant. It can even do it for months or even years continually, something that synthetic fertilizers cannot do. Second, it retains and holds the fertilizer in its place. You don't want the disgusting organic matter to pollute groundwater and potentially harm our water supply, right? Lastly, the nutrient base of compost is more extensive than the ones in synthetic fertilizers. Compost helps the plant develop using more tools rather than synthetic fertilizers, which isn't only expensive, but doesn't help the plant reach its full potential.

How to Make One

Making compost is a relatively easy task because what one basically needs to do is pile a lot of waste into a certain area. Good substances to add into the heap are food and textile waste and grasses. You may also opt for animal manure that may be present around the area; diversifying and putting a lot of different wastes into the heap will help the compost be as nutritious for the soil

as possible.

But if you don't want that option, which is very hands-on, you can always buy organic matter in your local garden store. These pass many requirements to ensure that it very nutritious and don't exceed metal amounts. For example, the limit for Arsenic in any compost as mandated by the TCLP is 41mg/kg. It also mandates a specific range of pH and particle size.

Compost is definitely here to stay given all the benefits it gives to the contemporary gardener. It helps hold nutrients to help the plant grow; it also keeps fertilizers from trickling down into important water supplies which could potentially harm the general population.

Making compost is absolutely easy, with the main rule being that you dump all your biodegradable waste in one specific location. If you are a bit choosy and demanding when it regards to the nutrition of your plant, you can always buy one at the garden shop. With all these in place, you will realize that compost and organic gardening definitely go hand-in-hand.

The Weather

Organic Gardening and the Weather

Weather has always been a complete nuisance for the gardener, not always providing the things needed to help the plant grow its best: ample sunlight and balanced rainfall. There are days when it goes over the line, putting up heat waves that rival those in Death Valley and throwing down rain like it is a boundless ocean. It seems as if weather has the temperament of a fifteen year-old, all its actions depending on its mood.

Whatever the circumstance the contemporary gardener has to face, there are always ingenious solutions thought of by our ancestors through the years or a new technique developed by brilliant agricultural scientists and/or engineers. The gardener has some extra tools in his/her pocket, aside from the commonplace rake and cutter, to aid the garden and help it to be at its best all the time.

Heat Waves

This is like a death sentence for a plant. The heat of the sun in one seemingly random day pierces its cuticle so much it can actually feel it slicing through its skin and crumbling its delicate parts. Very soon, its life will be in jeopardy and it will be a hapless and useless brown thing, with nothing to contribute to the garden in general but a load of stress.

To attack these horrid heat waves that happen every now and then, you should go back to the tools of organic gardening and maybe venture into container gardening. For the former, you should utilize the assistance of compost since it helps hold some essential nutrients and water so that the plant will have more longevity and therefore, can withstand heat waves. But you could also opt for the tried and tested rule of human intervention. When you think that the plant is getting too much of unsolicited sunlight, you may always provide some shade to protect the plant from it. You also have the choice of watering the plant at a frequent but reasonable manner so that it gets its needed water quota.

For container gardening, it can benefit the plant by its inherent quality of mobility. Given that, it helps the plant evade notorious heat waves common in tropical places by simply moving it to a shaded area. Don't forget to put some

compost in the container to help it hold.

Rainy Seasons

For thirty minutes, rain is simply a blessing for plants. But in longer and more frequent amounts, it is like shoving burgers into a person's mouth. Save it from plant obesity and subsequent death by adjusting a few variables in your gardening plan.

First, you have to regulate the compost and fertilizer content in your garden. The thing is, you have to give a little of these two things because the former holds water while having the latter will be useless since water carries the nutrients to other places due to mass. Given these two potential events, it is important for the gardener to rely on rare sunlight and let go of water-holding compost.

What's Worse?

Recurring rain is in no way worse or better than heat waves. Both hamper the

plants development, but the rainy season puts a certain ceiling on the plants growth as opposed to heat waves, which kills it continually but is avoidable. This ceiling cannot be avoided. Thus expect slow growth in part of the plant because it is simply inevitable. But you should still protect the plant because it could die; the rain practically trying to drown the plant.

Apparently, these two situations can be completely avoided by container gardening, which uses its inherent ability of mobility to escape such danger; but, it isn't exactly as glorious as a full-fledged garden. With that said, be careful of choosing what type of garden that you want.

There are a lot of ways you can avoid the disasters that come with horrid weather fluctuations. The methods described above are tried, tested and successful, but you can use human ingenuity to deter these impeding problems. You can use a retractable shade to avoid your plant from drowning and a fence to avoid water flowing into your garden. Its all on you. Just master the fundamentals of organic gardening and you've got a good foundation to build on your ideas in avoiding the problems that come with teenage-like weather.

The Farmers Market

Organic Gardening and the Farmers Market

More times than not, you'll find yourself with a rather large amount of crops that will go unused; and in the long run, they'll simply rot under the burning sun. This kind of counter-production when it comes to gardening does not only put the idea that the gardener is wasting some extra time, but it also means that he/she isn't seeing the opportunities that come along with surplus crops.

When this is the case, which actually happens to most gardeners, then it is advisable that you join other farmers and/or suppliers in the farmers market. If you are a bit more business-minded than most people, then along with some financial backing from friends and some co-suppliers from colleagues, you can create and found your own farmers market.

How to Make It a Reality

For most people, joining the farmers market seems an overwhelming and

demanding profession. Don't let that get into your head. All you need is some determination and some charisma to get people to your stall.

The fact is many farmers markets in the United States were started by a simple pig-headedness. The Original Farmers Market was opened by a contingent of farmers who displayed their produce on the tailgates of their trucks at Third and Fairfax, Los Angeles. From there, people flocked to their location and relished in the fresh air and of course, the healthful produce that they served. From there, it became a institution serendipitously and paved the road for many farmers around the country.

How the Farmers Market Gets Relevant in this Time

Today, there is a rise in the demand for fruits and vegetables that are sold in these kinds of markets. Why, you ask? Well, look around and read the news. People are talking about genetically modified foods in fast-food chains and pesticides contaminating many corporate-backed food outlets and supermarkets. With this in mind, people are getting more concerned if these large companies do care for their health or not. It seems as if they just want to cut costs and maximize profit at our expense.

That's where the sincere and hardworking farmers come in. With their expertise of organic gardening, today seems a perfect time to put up a vegetable and fruit business or join and help put up a Farmers Market. Not only do the consumers respect your image more than those ruthless and wily executives, you sell them at a competitive price given that you didn't use fancy synthetic pesticides.

How to Lure Consumers In

It's very easy to lure customers to your farmers market given the circumstances that exist today. Again, millions are not trusting large corporations as they used to and are opting for markets that sell organically-grown fruits and vegetables. Take that into your marketing plan and utilize it to the fullest. Put up flyers about the wonders of organically-grown fruits, saying that it uses the natural tools Mother Nature has made for us unlike the large agricultural corporations. Point out that you do not use notoriously deadly pesticides.

Also point out the fact that the food that you sell is a lot fresher than those sold

in supermarkets. Point out the fact that they have to be shipped through dusty roads and smog-filled traffic. Yours on the other hand, come from the place just behind your stall, and let them see that when the plants get plucked, they are of course washed and in a jiffy, they end up here on your stall. The idea of freshness will definitely lure them in.

There are a lot of favorable scenarios that convince the everyday farmer to think rich and sell their crops. With all the issues that swirl around the major agricultural companies around the world: genetically modified organisms, pesticides and those clandestine price fixes with the government, it seems as if large supermarkets cannot be trusted anymore. See this as an opportunity to tell the world about organic gardening and how you used it to grow your plants. Not only will people respect you for using healthy means to grow your crops, they will also show that extra bill that will find its way to your pocket.

Raised Bed Organics

How to Create a Raised Bed for Organics

For some people, the space on their lawn isn't large enough to accommodate a full-fledged garden, flushed with flora and fauna that will make any passersby give a second look. But you shouldn't despair when that seems out of reach. You can make a raised bed to help the gardener inch closer to the garden of their dreams. And the fact that making one is absolutely easy simply adds more points to consider creating a raised bed for their organic garden.

With all that said, read on to know about the nuts and bolts behind creating a raised bed for your organic garden.

First Phase

First and foremost, you should visualize and sketch the layout of the raised bed first. Think of the dimensions of it so you'll have a good estimate when you purchase the materials necessary when building it.

When you have a good idea of what you want your garden to look like, you should build a box with an open top and bottom so as it will look like fence. Think of it as a bottomless platform which you will put soil in. Build the box so

its high enough that you can put sufficient soil inside.

The border can be of any material you want. You can use lumber, synthetic wood, plastic or even bricks and/or rocks. Once you buy the necessary materials for your raised bed, pile up the blocks or cut the lumber to around 24 inches in height. That should be sufficient. If you are using lumber and considering a square or rectangular bed, then you should opt for four equal sized posts, around 4' x 4' in length and width so as they'll provide firm foundation for your bed. It will ensure further that the soil stays where it should be.

Second Phase

With the foundation built, you may now move on to the second phase of building your own raised bed. To make an underlayment of the raised bed, put a large piece of gardening plastic or weed mat on the location you're planning to put your raised bed. With this set, you have enough protection against weeds that may hinder your plants growth.

When you have established the underlayment, you may now place the raised bed on it. This may require some extra help if the bed is too large for the strength of one person. Make sure that you place the raised bed in a location that gets sufficient light from the sun. If you don't do that, your plants won't grow and you've wasted substantial time trying to create a raised bed.

With the underlayment, raised bed and location in place, you now have to put soil in it. Don't forget to place some compost or some composted manure on the bottom of the bed then add the layer of soil over it. A good compost/soil ratio is 1:3 or 2:5 for sufficient minerals and leeway for your plant to grow to its fullest.

Final Touches

You may also add some organic matter here and there like wood ash, bones and other biodegradable material to give your plant a little edge. From here, you have finally finished your raised bed and you may now get down and dirty and choose your favorite flower or plant and start doing the nitty-gritty gardening part. The options are virtually limitless for you, so enjoy your time and congratulations on building your first raised bed!

With your raised bed comes with a lot of advantages. The soil in these types of gardens are more customizable; meaning, you can put your own soil mix into it to ensure that you have the best possible growth for your plants. Also, a raised bed gives you a good start when planting because the soil in raised beds gets warmer faster, thus the nutrients from the soil (and sun) are held in for much longer and will prepare itself for some plants. Lastly, there are conveniences when gardening with a raised bed, access being the most important.

Tools, Equipment and Resources

Tools, Equipment and Resources for the Organic Gardener

Of course, with every garden comes the necessary shovels, rakes and the like. But the tools of the organic gardener are much more sophisticated than the average farmer. That is because there are more demands that come of the organic gardener like the issue of creating the perfect compost and how to put it efficiently into the bed of the garden. Also, irrigation may also be an important aspect of organic gardening since the garden, of course, needs enough water to survive and be the best it can possibly be.

There are a large variety of tools and supplies that the organic gardener can work with. They come in all different shapes and sizes and some also stem from different backgrounds. Some are born out of science and technology and a few are mainstays in business and agriculture. With that said, let's look through a few tools and supplies that aid the farmer or everyday gardener in their endeavors.

Fertilizers

This is definitely a must for any organic gardener because without it, your garden may not be considered organic at all! This is the bread and butter of your organic gardening experience. Use them wisely and optimize them for the benefit of your plant.

Some products, like the Twin N, is unique type of fertilizer that contains high yielding Nitrogen-fixing microbes that vastly improve the quality of the soil and of course, your crops. This can be applied in many ways, either using a foliar spray or using the irrigation system to transport it to specific areas in your garden.

Other fertilizers use a do-it-all approach like the Organic Link. This is very versatile and helps a good variety of plants, including vegetables and fruits. That is because it contains a diverse set of natural and biological ingredients, all aimed at different types of plants. Examples are phosphate, silica, neem and zeolite. But given the huge variety of minerals that are contained in this, you must use them cautiously and only put small amounts per season. For 120mm pots, you may use around one tablespoon per season.

And a last example of a fertilizer is Beyond Organic. This takes a step further than the two previous ones by providing a healthy combination of enzymes, amino acids and essential fatty acids. So to speak, this is an excellent tonic for all types of plants.

With all these fertilizers, the gardener definitely has a lot of options to ponder on and is assured that whether his/her garden is diverse or not, there are products that cater to the gardeners specific demands.

Plant Protection

For some gardeners, plant protection takes a premium over any other tool. And that is understandable especially in central areas where natural calamities are very common. They want to protect their investment not only for aesthetic reasons, but it also makes sense for business and the community in general.

For those who may be planting trees in areas around the community, there are tree guards in store for you. They are usually made of UV stabilized plastic that heightens the chances of your young tree making it in the future. Furthermore, it reduces the damage weather or animals could bring.

Sprays

And of course, you cannot go wrong with sprays. It takes the load off from carrying a sprinkler and pouring every individual plant. The convenience large sprays can give is definitely immeasurable. A product is the Solo 7.5 Liter Sprayer, with its convenient pump-up feature and also has an adjustable nozzle so that you could reach the farther ends of the garden without moving an inch. You may also use this for liquid-based fertilizers because these types necessitate the aid of an accurate spray like the product described.

With all the products described, the contemporary organic gardener doesn't have much to worry about given how technology has made things easier for him/her. There are fertilizers that cater to any specific type of garden, diverse or not, and of course provides the necessary nutrients to help the plant reach its full potential. And also, plant protection tools and sprays are available to the organic farmer so as to heighten the probability that young plants will make it alive and help them get the nutrients that they need. With all these things said, I hope that you'll be more interested in organic gardening given all the conveniences technology has brought to the table.

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