

Spring Planting Tips that will Supersize your Garden

Are you ready for the spring growing season?

Save money and create a healthy environment by making your own compost, herbicides and pesticides. Give your yard a jumpstart with these easy tips that will help your garden grow.

Spring Clean Up

- Clear drainage ditches of winter leaves and debris so early rains can drain properly. New seedlings need well-drained soil, so spring cleaning can help them grow faster. Add organic materials like twigs and leaves to your compost pile.

Top-Dress the Beds

- Add a 4-inch layer of compost to your garden beds.
- Resist the urge to [turn the beds](#) over as they have established ecosystems that are best left undisturbed. The nutrients from the compost will filter down with the rain and the soil will be aerated by worms.

Pruning

- Prune roses in early spring and add a ¼ cup of Epsom salts to the soil around each rose bush.
- Once your early spring flowering shrubs like forsythia, lilac and magnolia have flowered, prune them to encourage growth.

Lawn Care

- Rake the lawn to remove twigs and other detritus that has collected over the winter. Rake the verge to remove gravel that the snow plough has dumped there. Gravel and other stones can be kicked up by the mower.
- Mix lawn seed with some topsoil and then sprinkle on the areas that need better coverage. Water well until new grass is established.
- Dandelions? Avoid using herbicides on weeds in your garden and lawn. Instead, employ a natural eradication method that will be safer for your children and pets. Find DIY tutorials for herbicides [here](#).
- Tired of lawncare? Replace your lawn with ground covers that are hardy enough to provide coverage but don't need to be watered or mowed. Opt for native species where possible as they require less care.

Create a Composting Area

- [Upcycle old storage tubs or bins](#) or use a composter to create a healthy, natural compost that is filled with the organisms that ensure healthy soil.
- Kitchen scraps, grass cuttings and leaves make good additions to your compost bin.

Growing Veggies

- Plant garlic, onions, chives and chrysanthemums around the borders of your veggie beds to repel insects.
- Late frost? Cover your seedlings with boxes, jars, tarps or plastic overnight to save them.
- Placing mulch around the base of each veggie will help retain water and keep weeds at bay.
- Tomatoes love calcium, so pop an antacid tablet into each hole before planting your seedlings. Plant tomato seedlings in deep holes with soil all the way up to the first leaves. They will root all the way down the stem.
- Sprinkle used coffee grounds around your veggies to fend off mosquitoes, ants, slugs and maggots.

Create a Chemical-Free Garden

- DIY fungicide recipe: Mix together 1 tablespoon baking soda and 1/2 tablespoon olive oil in 2 litres of warm water. Spray onto affected areas.
- DIY pesticide recipe: Put 1 tablespoon biodegradable liquid soap, 10 drops lemon essential oil, 2 cloves crushed garlic and 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper in a spray bottle (about 750 ml or 25 oz.) and fill with warm water. Shake to mix and spray on plants regularly.

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