

“Five Minutes Guide to Flower Gardening”

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Introduction

First things first ... thank you very much for getting this Gardening Guide.

Do you dream of big beautiful flowers growing right in your own garden? Would you like to have a flower garden that makes your neighbors say "Wow"! Would you like to have someone take the guesswork out of growing gorgeous flowers? Then look no further than our Flower Gardening Guides.

We have everything you need for great **flower gardening and in one easy package**. By acting on our advice, following a few simple **flower gardening** basics and using our articles, your **flower gardening** will be much easier and the results you see will be truly amazing.

Take the Guess work out of Growing Big, Beautiful Flowers

Our flower gardening package contains everything you need to grow beautiful flowers without a lot of work.

Gardeners of all skill levels will discover ideas that can help bring color and excitement to spaces big and small. You'll also learn to choose the right soilless mix and how to place containers for maximum effect.

Enjoy

Bakari Masudi

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Choosing a Garden that is Perfect for You

If you're thinking about starting a garden, the first thing you need to consider is what type of garden you will have. There are many different choices and often it can be hard to pick just one, but hopefully you can narrow it down. But by narrowing it down, you'll make the gardening experience easier on yourself and the plants. If all your plants are similar, then it shouldn't be very hard to care for them all. So here are some of the main garden ideas for you to choose from.

If you're just looking for something to look nice in your yard, you'll want a flower garden. These are usually filled with perennial flower. Perennial flowers are flowers which stay healthy year-round. They're basically weeds because of their hardiness, only nice looking. Different areas and climates have different flowers which are considered perennials. If you do a quick internet search for your area, you can probably find a list of flowers that will bring your flower garden to life.

These usually only require work in the planting stage - after that, the flower take care of themselves. The only downside to this is that you don't have any product to show for it.

Another choice for your garden is to have a vegetable garden. These usually require a little more work and research than a flower garden, but can be much more rewarding. No matter what time of the year it is, you can usually find one vegetable that is still prospering. That way you can have your garden be giving you produce almost every day of the year! When starting a vegetable garden, you should build it with the thought in mind that you will be adding more types of veggies in later. This will help your expandability. Once all your current crops are out of season, you won't be stuck with almost nowhere to put the new crops. A vegetable garden is ideal for someone who wants some produce, but doesn't want to devote every waking hour to perfecting their garden (see below.)

One of the more difficult types of gardens to manage is a fruit garden. It's definitely the most high-maintenance. When growing fruits, many more pests will be attracted due to the sweetness. You not only have to deal with having just the right dirt and fertilizer, you have to deal with choosing a pesticide that won't kill whoever eats the fruits. Your fruit garden will probably not produce year-round. The soil needs to be just right for the plants to grow, and putting in another crop during its off-season could be disastrous to its growth process. If you're willing to put lots of work into maintaining a garden, then a fruit garden could be a good choice for you.

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So now that I've outlined some of the main garden types that people choose, I hope you can make a good decision. Basically, the garden type comes down to what kind of product you want, and how much work you want to put into it. If you're looking for no product with no work, go with a flower garden. If you want lots of delicious product, but you are willing to spend hours in your garden each day, then go for a fruit garden. Just make sure you don't get into something you can't handle!

Choosing and Planting Perennials

If you've been growing a vegetable garden for a while, you might be feeling lightly disgruntled at how plain it is to look at. I too began my gardening career with a vegetable garden, but I decided that it wasn't quite as pleasing to look at as I would have liked. I heard from a friend that the use of perennial flowers could be a great way to liven up my garden without adding any extra work for me.

Perennial flowers are strong, local flowers that come back every year without having to replant or do any extra work. During their off seasons, the flowers and stems die back and you can hardly even tell the plant is there (rather than just dying and looking like hideous brown clumps in your garden). When it's time to bloom, entirely new flowers shoot up where the old ones were.

Before deciding whether to put in perennials or not, you need to make sure that your soil has proper drainage. If the water stays saturated for long periods of time, you should build a raised bed. To test, dig a hole and fill it with water. Wait a day, and then fill it with water again. All traces of water should be gone within 10 hours. If the hole isn't completely dry, you will need to build a raised bed.

Picking your perennials can be a complicated process. The goal should be to have them flowering as much as possible during the year, so you should create an outline of the year. Research the different types of flower you want, and create a timeline of flowering. If you plan it right, you can have a different type of flower blooming at any point in the year. Getting just the right mixture of seeds can give your yard a constantly changing array of colors.

When you go to buy the seeds from your local florist or nursery, you might be able to find a custom seed mixture for your area. This takes the really tough research part out of the job. Usually these blends are optimized for the local climate, and do great jobs of having flowers always grow in your yard. If one of these isn't available, you can ask the employees what they think would be a good mixture. They should be happy to help you put something together which will be optimal for whatever you desire.

You should definitely use mulch when planting perennials. This will reduce the overall amount of work you have to do, by reducing the amount of weeds and increasing the water retention. Bark or pine needles work great, I have found, and depending on the rest of your yard you might have them on hand at no charge. As for fertilizer, you should use it sparingly once your plants start to come to life.

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When you actually go to plant the seeds, you should put them in small, separate clumps according to the directions. This is because they tend to spread out, and if you have too many too close together then they will end up doing nothing but choking each other out. As you plant them, throw in a little bit of extremely weak fertilizer. In no time at all you should start to see flowers blooming up.

Creating a Raised Bed

If your current planting goals involve plants that require good water drainage, I am sure you know how frustrating it is to have a yard that just won't cooperate. Some plants can handle the excess water that comes about from being in an area that doesn't drain properly. In fact, it might just cause them to bloom more lushly. However, other plants don't cope as well, and it will cause them to die a gruesome, bloated death. You should always find out about the drainage required for every plant you buy, and make sure that it won't conflict with any of the areas you are considering planting it in.

In order to test how much water your designated patch of soil will retain, dig a hole approximately ten inches deep. Fill it with water, and come back in a day when all the water had disappeared. Fill it back up again. If the 2nd hole full of water isn't gone in 10 hours, your soil has a low saturation point. This means that when water soaks into it, it will stick around for a long time before dissipating. This is unacceptable for almost any plant, and you are going to have to do something to remedy it if you want your plants to survive.

The usual method for improving drainage in your garden is to create a raised bed. This involves creating a border for a small bed, and adding enough soil and compost to it to raise it above the rest of the yard by at least 5 inches. You'll be amazed at how much your water drainage will be improved by this small modification. If you're planning to build a raised bed, your prospective area is either on grass or on dirt. For each of these situations, you should build it slightly differently.

If you want to start a raised garden in a non grassy area, you won't have much trouble. Just find some sort of border to retain the dirt you will be adding. I've found that there is nothing that works quite as well as a few two by fours. After you've created the wall, you must put in the proper amount soil and steer manure. Depending on how long you plan to wait before planting, you will want to adjust the ratio to allow for any deteriorating that may occur.

If you're trying to install a raised bed where sod already exists, you will have a slightly more difficult time. You will need to cut the sod around the perimeter of the garden, and flip it over. This may sound simple, but you will need something with a very sharp edge to slice the edges of the sod and get under it. Once you have turned it all upside down, it is best to add a layer of straw to discourage the grass from growing back up. After the layer of straw, simply add all the soil and steer manure that a normal garden would need.

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Planting your plants in your new area shouldn't pose much difficulty. It is essentially the same process as your usual planting session. Just be sure that the roots don't extend too far into the original ground level. The whole point of creating the raised bed is to keep the roots out of the soil which saturates easily. Having long roots that extend that far completely destroys the point.

Once you have plants in your new bed, you'll notice an almost immediate improvement. The added soil facilitates better root development. At the same time, evaporation is prevented and decomposition is discouraged. All of these things added together makes for an ideal environment for almost any plant to grow in. So don't be intimidated by the thought of adjusting the very topography of your yard. It is a simple process as I'm sure you've realized, and the long term results are worth every bit of work.

Creating Microclimates to Facilitate Growth

Many gardeners live in areas where almost anything can grow effortlessly. Just plant the seeds and water it for a few weeks, and you've got a beautifully lush plant. But if you live in somewhere like Colorado, you'll understand what its like to have a slim selection of plants that naturally grow. It can be quite a challenge to facilitate the growth of a large variety of plants, especially when the very world you live in seems to be rooting against you.

Some people solve this problem by loading up their plants with every type of chemical and fertilizer known to man. This usually works, but to me it seems kind of unnatural to rely on man made materials to keep your plants alive. Also, if I'm growing fruits or vegetables, I don't feel very comfortable eating something that is entirely composed of chemicals.

A gardening theory that I have relied on in the past to grow many types of a plant is that of creating a "microclimate" for each type of plant. This is when you regulate the sunlight, shade, moisture, and wind factors for each separate plant. It sounds like a challenge, and it is. But you can regulate these factors in such a way that the plant feels just like it is in the ideal growing conditions. This can be achieved by the use of wind barriers, shading umbrellas, extra water, or different types or amounts of compost.

If you're ready to make an attempt at creating microclimates, you'll need to make a detailed plan in advanced. You should start by finding a large shade providing bush or tree that will grow fast and naturally in your area. Just look at some undeveloped plots of land and see what is there. Most likely it grew on its own without any planting or care. This is what you want to happen. Usually the growing of one plant can bring about the growing of another more desirable plant.

If you have a fence in your backyard (you would be surprised at how many people don't) then you already have a good amount of shade to work with.

You can start the microclimate process using just the shade of the fence, combined with (perhaps) a screen or large bush to shade your new plant for the other half of the day that the fence doesn't take care of. The fence is also useful for shading against wind for very fragile plants.

Once you have established the shade, be it natural or unnatural, you have created a slightly less harsh miniature environment. You must remember this is a gradual process, and find a new plant to put in the shade of the other one. Now your

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choices are a little more open. You don't have to go with a rugged plant like the one you did before; you can now choose a plant that survives in cooler weather.

If the plant you are trying to grow next requires more moisture in the air than your area provides, installing a fountain or small pond can fix this problem due to the evaporation. You may think you don't want to waste water on a pond or fountain, but it's all going toward the betterment of your garden. It's just like the watering process, only indirect. As an added benefit, usually fountains are quite aesthetically attractive and a great addition to your garden.

I can't explain every stage of the process, because everyone's goals and setups are slightly different. But to reach your goal, you should do research on every plant that you would like to have in your garden. Find out everything you can about the zone that it flourishes in, and ask yourself how you can emulate that zone within your own backyard. Almost always you can take control of the environment and recreate whatever you wish. Usually all it takes is some planning and strategy.

Dealing with Garden Pests

While tending to my own garden, I have found that one of the most frustrating things that can happen to a gardener is to walk outside to check on your plants. It's just a routine walk to make sure that your garden is thriving, but you end up finding holes in all of your plants that looked fine only hours before.

The explanations for some of these plant-destroying holes are garden pests. Some of the main garden pests are slugs, worms, caterpillars, birds, snails, and the occasional gopher.

Although you can never wipe out these pests entirely, after all your hard work in the garden you have to do something.

Insects are one of the worst things to have in your garden; they can live under the soil, in old weeds or piles of leaves, or in a number of other places. In order to help keep insects away, always try and eliminate places in your garden and near your garden that these insects and other plant diseases could be living. Remove old leaves, weeds, or any other decaying matter that insects and diseases could be living in from your yard. Also, regularly turn over your garden soil and break apart any clumps of dirt so that you can eliminate the living spaces any insects that might be hiding underground.

Another way to rid your garden of the pests is to use dormant spray, which is used to keep destructive insects and diseases under control. It is best that you use dormant spray when your plants are dormant, usually around February or early March. I have used dormant spray many times on my garden and it has worked wonders on keeping insects out. But as I learned from experience, dormant spray is only effective if you follow the correct instructions. When I first decided to use some on my garden, I just dumped it everywhere in hopes of killing everything harmful. Unfortunately I ended up killing my entire garden along with my neighbors. Some insects can be beneficial to your garden though, so be sure to find out which insects help your garden.

Another pest problem I've had besides insects has been birds. Whenever I see birds in my garden I run outside a chase them away, but as soon as I step inside they come right back. The solution that I've come up with to keep the birds away from my garden is to put a bird feeder in my yard.

Instead of costing me time and money by eating my garden, the birds eat at the bird feeder. In the long run it'll save you money. Not only can a bird feeder help keep birds away from your garden, but they can also be a new

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part of your yard decoration. Although not completely eliminating my bird problem, my bird feeder has made the problem smaller. Getting a dog has also helped.

If you start seeing mounds of dirt around your yard, and your plants keep unexplainably dieing, you can assume that you have a gopher problem. Thankfully, this is one of the few garden pests that I haven't had.

However my friend has struggled with a tremendous gopher infestation, so I decided to research it. Gophers are rodents that are five to fourteen inches long. Their fur can be black, light brown, or white, and they have small tails. One method of getting rid of these root-eating pests is to set traps. The key to successfully capturing a gopher using a trap is to successfully locate the gopher's tunnels and set the trap correctly.

Another way to get rid of them is to use smoke bombs, which you place into the tunnel and the smoke spreads through out it and hopefully reaches the gopher.

If you suspect that your gardens are being pillaged by any of the pests I mentioned, I encourage you to try your hardest to eliminate the problem as soon as possible. The longer you let the species stay, the more established it will become.

Getting Started in Container Gardening

Sometimes, the urge to garden might be stomped out by other circumstances, such as living arrangements or space constrictions. If you live in an apartment, you can't really operate a full garden, just because you don't really have a yard! I think that one of the best solutions for this problem is to grow plants in containers. You can hang these, or just arrange them on your patio, window sill or balcony. Just a few baskets or pots, and your whole living area will look much classier and nicer.

A benefit of growing in small containers is the fact that you can move them around to suit your needs. If you rearrange your furniture and you think that it would look nicer if it was in the other area, it's no trouble at all to scoot it over. As long as the lighting is about the same, your plant shouldn't mind the transition at all. Another benefit of the containers' versatility is the fact that you can adapt it to simulate any environment depending on the type of soil you fill it with and where you place it.

If you are trying to make an aesthetically pleasing arrangement of containers and plants, you can adjust the containers to be at different heights by hanging them from the ceiling or placing them on supports.

Hanging them will allow you to make the most of the space you have. This is called "vertical gardening". If you pull it off right, you can make a very pleasing arrangement of plants while conserving your valuable space.

If you live in an apartment, you know how important it is to conserve space! One method of vertical gardening is the use of a wooden step ladder. If painted correctly, you can arrange all the plants on it in a beautiful, stylish cascade of color.

The maintenance of container plants takes slightly more time, since you have to water more often and go around to each individual container.

However, the square footage for container plants is much less than that of an actual garden, so the time spent on maintenance and watering is more balanced. It is important that you don't over-water your container plants, as this can be just as fatal to their health as under-watering.

When choosing containers for your plants, you'll want to buy them all at once along with some extras in case they break or you add more plants later. You don't want them to be all the same shape and size, but definitely the same style so that the compliment each other. Plastic containers are the best and require the least amount

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of watering, but if you want to stick with clay or earthen pots then you should line the inside with plastic. This helps it retain water more, as the clay will soak up water.

Another thing to remember when buying pots is the fact that the size of the pot will ultimately constrict the size of the plant. Make a careful choice of pots according to what you wish to grow in each one. If you search for the plant you chose on the internet, you should be able to find specifications as to how much root space it should be given. This can even be an advantage for you if you choose a plant that can grow very large. If you only have a limited amount of space for it, you can constrict it by choosing a pot that isn't large enough to support huge amounts of growth.

If the benefits of container gardening sound appealing to you, then you should start planning out your container garden today. If you write a list of all the plants you desire to have, you can do the necessary research to find out what size and shape of pots you should get. After that, it's just a matter of arranging them in a way that makes your home look the nicest.

****Extra Bonus******FREE Mini-course:**

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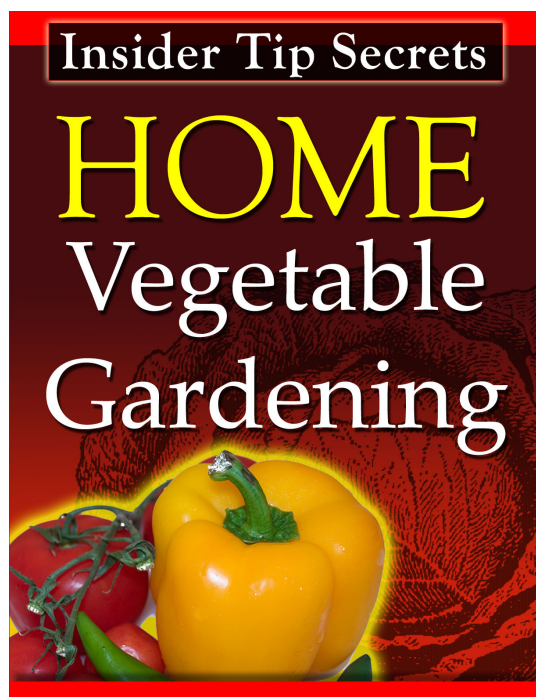
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**Learn Everything You Need to Know
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Learn everything that there is to know about:

- What to plant, where and when and the different types of planting methods, depth, care and maintenance for root-type veggies, leaf-type veggies and 'fruits'
- **How to prepare and enrich soil** and the vegetable patch itself (layout, care, watering, weeding, cultivating, etc.)
- How to plant according to a schedule and plan, to **ensure produce year and season-round**
- Gardening tools of the trade, what to use when and where, most effectively to get the job and tasks at hand done
- THREE BASIC COMPONENTS that have to be present for plants to grow, thrive and 'feed'.
 - They are (i) nitrogen, (ii) phosphoric acid, and (iii) potash.
- **Types of soil (rocky, sandy, clay, gravel, hard/soft), soil feed (organic, non-organic) and how they can all work together to create the optimal growing space for plants of all types and varieties.**
- Making the most of planning, preparation, soil and soil enriching, seeding, planting, ventilation, watering, transplanting
- Different methods of planting: row, hilling and drilling and what is best for what types of veggies/fruit
- **Enjoying fruits/berries and fresh vegetables from your garden all season long**, as well as the in and outdoor activities that make that possible.

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