

[Another eBookWholesaler Publication](#)



Proudly brought to you by

**Lewis Philips signature books**

[Email](#)

### **Recommended Resources**

- [Web Site Hosting Service](#)
- [Internet Marketing](#)
- [Affiliate Program](#)

## Please Read This **First**

### *Terms of Use*

**No alteration by anyone to the appearance, format or content of this ebook as supplied by eBookwholesaler is allowed.** This electronic book is Copyright © 2014 eBookwholesaler. All rights are reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means; electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission from the copyright holder(s).

You must not distribute any part of this ebook in any way. eBookwholesaler Members are the sole distributors and must abide by the [eBookwholesaler page for Terms of Use](#). No-one may offer or distribute this book through eBay or any type of auction. This book is published by eBookwholesaler and no-one else may claim to be the publisher.

### *Disclaimer*

The advice contained in this material might not be suitable for everyone. The author got information from sources believed to be reliable and from personal experience, but does not imply nor offer any guarantee of accuracy.

The author, publisher and distributors never give legal, accounting, medical or any other type of professional advice. The reader must always seek those services from competent professionals that can review their own particular circumstances.

The author, publisher and distributors particularly disclaim any liability, loss, or risk taken by individuals who act on the information here. All readers must accept full responsibility for their use of this material.

All pictures used in this book are for illustration only. No link or endorsement between the people pictured and the book, author or publisher is implied and should not be assumed. All pictures must not be used for anything else without the rights holder's prior written permission.

Images © 2014 Jupiterimages Corporation, a Getty Images company.

## Contents

<b>Please Read This First.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Terms of Use.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Disclaimer.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<b>Contents .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Companion Plants. ....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>About the Author .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Modern Gardening is much Easier.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>How to Start Your New Garden.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Where Can You Grow Your Plants .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Raised beds are Easier and more Productive .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Simple Tips for Using Seeds.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>More Simple Tips .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Common Plant Pests .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<i>Aphids.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Earwigs .....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Slugs and Snails.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<b>Best Plants for New Gardeners .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<i>Beans .....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Tomatoes.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Carrots .....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Spring Onions.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Ginger .....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Sweet Potatoes .....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Potatoes.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<b>Herbs to Begin with .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<i>Mint.....</i>	<i>24</i>

*Dill* .....25  
*Sage* .....25  
*Parsley* .....25  
*Basil* .....25  
*Thyme* .....26

**Safety in Your Garden** ..... 27

*A Family-friendly Garden*.....27

**Garden Safety for Pets** ..... 30

**Looking after Yourself**..... 32

**Containers for Your Plants**..... 34

**Resources and Links**..... 36

*U.S.A.* .....36  
    *Australia* .....36

**Preserving and Storing Food.** .....37

*U.S.A.* .....37

**Companion Plants.** .....37

**Gardeners Live Better and Healthier!**..... 38

## Companion Plants.

Growing different plants near each other for mutual benefit has a history going back centuries.

The basic idea is to use plants to protect each other so they both produce better crops and damage from pests and diseases are reduced.

Some plants are just used to provide shade and protection for smaller species.

Some will repel pests or diseases for their benefit and also that of other plants grown nearby.

The Chinese used Mosquito Fern (Azolla) to protect rice plants for hundred of years before companion planting became popular elsewhere.

The Mosquito fern form a blanket on the water so that othe rplants cannot get light. But, the grower pokes holes in the mat of fern for the shoots of rice to grow up through.

The fern is also used as a mat on areas where weeds need to be smothered.

**Nasturtiums** are reputed to repel the cucumber beetle. They also provide suitable habitat for predatory insects which feed on some serious pests.

Onions and leeks are reputed to discourage the carrot-fly, possibly due to their smell.

**Peas** and **beans** are worth the space they need for their many uses in cooking and also their ability to fix nitrogen in the soil around them. This is very helpful for **corn**, among other plants.

**Squash** can also benefit from the nitrogen and it will reduce the amount of weeds when its leaves are big enough to cover the ground area.

There is a link to an article about companion plants in the Resources section at the end of this book.

## About the Author

Will Johnson is very keen to share what he's learned about gardening with you.

There are plenty of tips which you can use to improve your garden, but Will's book is not just about how to grow bigger, better or more crops.

Will said, "I want to share the other benefits of gardening with my readers and help people who think that they don't have enough time, energy, space or money to have their own garden!"

He said, "You can have a garden in a window box or an old tire. You don't need a piece of ground and you certainly don't need a lot of money or time to have fun and grow some healthy vegetables and fruit."

"Just having a few plants growing around or in your home will help you keep everyone healthier and calmer. That's been proven through research."

"Even people that are not very strong can have a garden which is within their capabilities. And, it won't take a lot of time or effort to maintain and enjoy it."

Anyone in your family can have their own plants and enjoy growing them. Kids can grow some of their own food – they just love eating whatever they've grown themselves!"

Will said, "I think my garden is as good for my health as a gym membership would be but it's a lot less expensive and there's less effort involved too!"

"I'm glad the book will help other people to learn how to get the sort of benefits we get from our garden."

## Introduction

I've called this book, "The Healthy Garden" because any sort of garden will, I believe, help you to be healthier in many ways.

Most people think that the only health benefits from gardening are the exercise we get moving large plants and digging deep into the soil.

Thankfully, the lifting can be done with barrows and other devices and you don't need to do as much digging as was required with the traditional style of gardening unless that's what you want to do!

Whatever your circumstances and needs, you can have a garden of some sort and your investment in time, energy and money does not have to be high unless you choose to spend the money that way.

I will show you that gardening can be easier and more productive than ever before. And, I'm not going to suggest that you need any special equipment for it, again, unless you want to spend up a bit.

I also put some emphasis on safety for you, your family, pets and the environment. I look for the most proven, simplest and safest methods because I want to be gardening for a long time to come.

I am not an expert and, of course, there are always new methods and products being offered to the enormous gardening market.

So, learn what you can from me and it will help you to get better results now as well as understanding what to ask when somebody offers you the next "instant, no-work garden miracle" product.




Among other things, I will tell you about pests and helpful bugs, how to reduce (and sometimes avoid) a lot of the effort required by traditional gardening methods, why you should talk to your plants (they don't gossip!) and what they can tell you about your home.

## Modern Gardening is much Easier

If you like the idea of having a garden to produce fresh, clean produce and lovely flowers, you can do it with the tips and other information you will read here.

The traditional garden needed a lot of space, time and effort to be successful. But, now you can grow some of your own vegetables and flowers even if you don't have a lot of any of those things to spare.

This book will show you that you can have a garden which brings pleasure and good food for you and your family using:

-  Whatever space you have
-  The time you have available, and
-  A very low investment of energy and money.

There are lots of simple ways to save time, effort, money and produce good crops even in small spaces.

The benefits of having your own garden go beyond the greater variety and healthiness of the food you eat.

The plants' very presence will improve the air you breathe, help the bees and other beneficial insects to increase so that more plants are pollinated and better crops are possible each year.

Your garden will also give you some gentle exercise and a simple way to relax from the stress of your daily work without paying any fees or incurring many other costs.

I don't think that most gardeners save much from their current food bill by having their own garden, but the constant increase in charges at the stores is suggesting to me that it won't be long before we do.

And, of course, we already have the advantage of choosing to grow the varieties and types of vegetables and other plants which we prefer. And, if we take the trouble to save some seed from our favorites each year, we can



keep growing those varieties because we are not dependent on companies which may not think they're worth continuing to make available.

In the sections which follow, I may have some tips which are familiar to you but I hope there will also be some which help you to make greater success of all your gardening efforts and perhaps inspire you to try some things which you have not done before.

## How to Start Your New Garden

Start with a PLAN so you make the most of the resources you have.

Avoid pushing yourself very hard with your first few sessions. We get excited about any new project but successful gardeners are all patient people.

You probably have some preferences about the plants you most want to grow. Check their particular requirements and ensure that you can supply them without much trouble.

As well as patience, you must be prepared for losing some of the plants you most want to succeed with, even though you do everything according to the best advice. Mother nature always has the deciding vote and disappointments do happen to every gardener.



This is important to remember when you encourage your kids to do some gardening. Always be supportive but don't build up their anticipation too much. If they see you also lose a few plants, they will learn a valuable lesson for life.

The needs of the plants must be met. Sunlight is essential as well as good soil or a suitable substitute, water and the right nutrients.

What space can you use for the plants? Even if you don't have space for garden beds, you have plenty of options.

Even if you have plenty of space, you may not want a traditional layout with separate plots for each type of plant.

That layout can be a strain for people with physical limitations but they can get similar results by growing plants in raised beds or on benches.

If you don't have ground to grow your plants, you can use pots, window

boxes and other containers, even fish ponds.

You can also grow compatible plants close to each other.

If you mix plants together in raised beds, you have a low-cost way to produce a greater variety of quality produce with minimum effort!

## Where Can You Grow Your Plants

If you have a small home with no room for an outdoor garden, you can still grow many types of plants in the traditional window boxes or plant pots to add some healthy highlights to your meals and bring more color to your home.

Adding some plants to the interior of your home will give you more than just greenery, it will help to improve the air you breathe as well!

If you have only a small area for your garden, you may think that it would not produce enough to be worth the time and effort needed to set it up and maintain it.

But, I will share some methods which have become popular in recent years which can help you get more from less and with less effort and cost!

Medical research has proven the benefits of gardening as a gentle form of exercise and relaxation.

Gardening doesn't have to be hard work or very expensive! And you can fit some plants into whatever space you have and the time you can give it.

The "secret" is to plan your garden to fit your lifestyle and only use the types of plants you can grow successfully in the area you have available.

Then, you use the tips and strategies I share in this book to make the most of every resource.

### **De-clutter to Make Space for a Garden!**

If you have limited space, is there anything in your home which you no longer are getting value from? Check for stuff which is just taking up space which might give you something you can sell or give away.

Then, you might use that space to add a few plants to your home. You might even decide that some of those surplus items could become containers for some of your new plants.

If you have any discarded timber, concrete blocks or metal sheet, you may want to use them to make some raised beds which are easy to manage and

can produce more vegetables and fruit in the same area!

If you already have a garden, look through the list of companion plants in this book. You can save space and give plants extra protection from some pests by planting suitable companions in the same area.

## Raised beds are Easier and more Productive



As the population increases and the size of most housing blocks shrink we need to learn to produce more from less.

That applies to the home garden as much as any other part of our economy.

I think few can deny that the evolving raised garden bed has been a significant improvement over earlier systems.

The square foot gardening system was a further improvement on that .

Many people have introduced their own tweaks to them but I'll outline just the basics for you here.

That will be enough for you to decide if you want to try this and get you started.

Where the traditional garden had a number of plots separated by paths which were wide enough to walk along with your wheelbarrow, raised bed systems have beds which are not wider than 4 feet (120 cm) either way. They are about 30 inches(75 cm) deep but can be higher if that is easier for the person maintaining it.

If the soil is fairly good, the vegetation which will be below the bed is removed and soil or a suitable mix is heaped on the area until the desired height is reached. Some people will do this without a frame to save money and time.

But, I suggest that you use a frame which is made of materials which will hold the contents of the bed secure and do not contain anything which could have a negative effect on the plants or the gardener.

If there are perennial weeds in the soil where the bed will be constructed, lay

at least a couple of inches of newspapers over the whole area to choke off air to the weeds and then build up the bed on top.

Use a good quality growing medium for the bed or much of the effort and cost will be wasted.

Before going further, I will point out why the bed is made like this and some advantages it gives the gardener and the plants.

The bed can be filled with garden soil or a mixture of quality potting mix, peat or other suitable growing material and vermiculite. The former is probably cheaper but many choose the second option because it is largely a one-time expense – none is wasted on growing weeds or littering the paths and surrounds.

The height of the bed is easy for the gardener to manage. If they use a wheelchair, the bed can be made to suit the height of that.

The path around the bed can be whatever width is comfortable for the gardener. If they have more than one bed, the paths between them can be whatever width suits.

The width of the bed allows for the gardener to reach any part of it without much effort.

The top of the bed is never touched by anyone's feet, wheelchair or any other heavy equipment. This reduces most of the potential for impact on the plants or compacting of the soil.

The paths become firmer over time but the beds remain plant-friendly and get full benefit of the fertilizer, water and anything else which is applied to them.

None is wasted on the paths.

Weeds are easy to see and remove before they can compete with the productive plants.

Frames can be of cement blocks, plant-friendly wood which won't rot through contact with the growing medium or rocks. Some are also made with metal

or plastic sides.

The square foot system adds a refinement to this basic idea.

Each bed is divided into sections which are about one square foot.

Each section has a different type of plant in it. This allows for more different plants to be grown in the available area. Because of the partitions between the sections, the plants do not compete with each other to any significant degree. Each plant has enough space for its full development, so some will have a whole section to themselves. There will be several plants in some other sections.

This allows companion plants to be grown close together and for each section to be given different fertilizer if needed.

This system can be adapted further. Narrow beds can be set up against walls or fences to make use of those areas which might not otherwise be productive.

Since there is only a need for a path around each bed, more of the available area can be used for plants.

You could put a trellis on the wall behind a bed to make full use of that area.

It is a good idea to rotate the types of plants in each section each year to avoid the possibility of a build-up of some pest or disease which favors the previous type of plants which was there.

If there is a disease problem, it can probably be confined to one section. That will minimize damage and the effort required to clean it away.



## Simple Tips for Using Seeds

Seeds are a good way to start growing new types of plants in your garden.

They are cheap and easy to obtain.

But, growing from seeds means that you will need to give them care and attention for longer. There will be more chance of loss through the growing season, especially when you transfer them to the main growing area.

You can often collect seed from plants you have grown or get some from other gardeners who have that plant growing.

When you buy seed, it's usually worthwhile to go to a garden store rather than the supermarket. You'll be able to get more advice from the knowledgeable staff and build a customer relationship over time which is worth more than the cost of your purchase.

You don't need to buy much seed for a home garden. A smaller packet may be more expensive but buying the larger size could mean you throw or give most of them away because the plants you grow in that first season may provide enough seeds for later years.

Avoid seeds from suppliers if their seeds are genetically modified. These seeds often produce plants which do not produce seeds themselves, which means you have to buy more seeds each season.

## More Simple Tips

Never use old seeds. You will have to work as hard but the results may not meet your expectations.

Seeds from store-bought produce are also likely to be less productive now. Many of the companies producing the seeds alter their DNA so they will not reproduce true to type.

You can get reliable seeds from other gardeners that you know in your area who have been saving seed from what they've grown in past years. Their original plants were not genetically modified.

There are also registered suppliers who sell "heirloom seeds" which will reproduce true to type. They cost more but are worth the money because they are likely to have better flavor than many current offerings and the seed you get from them at the end of the season will mostly produce the same type of plant in future seasons..

The most important element in your garden is the growing medium.

Use good quality mixes, learn what the items on the label mean and never add anything harmful to the soil.

Adding compost enriches the soil which your plants depend on for their growth and productivity. So, yes – the time and effort to compost your scraps to add to your garden or even your pot plants really is worthwhile.

**Join a garden club:** The information you get about local conditions and what varieties of each plant will thrive in your area will repay your subscription. But, the most value will come from the support you get from the members with more experience. They will help you with your gardening problems.

Also, most clubs have organized special rates to be available just for their Members from some quality suppliers. And the members can usually be relied on to give their opinions (based on experience) of any major garden purchases you are considering. Which, again, can save you a lot of money.

## Common Plant Pests

### *Aphids*

Aphids are also known as plant lice. They hide under leaves. Chemical solutions include sprays which get into the plant and build up, killing the aphids and other pests but also destroying ladybirds and other insects which would kill the aphids.

The appearance of ants may mean aphids are also present. The ants milk the aphids for a secretion which ants love.

Caterpillars which are the larval forms of some moths and butterflies will eat many of your food plants.

### *Earwigs*

Earwigs have pinchers on their backend and are very destructive.

They like damp areas and will devastate the foliage of your beans, cabbage, cauliflower and just about any other plant we grow for food, they will make holes in fruit and remove sections from leaves.

They do also have a beneficial role to play as they attack aphids!

Trap earwigs by dampening some rolled newspaper and laying it near your plants. Then, shake the earwigs collected in the paper into a bucket of soapy water early the next morning. Some people crush the earwigs they catch but some types release a very bad smell when that is done.

If you have poultry, make sure you do not dispose of the soap water anywhere that your birds can contact the water or where the water might get into any area where the birds go.

Keep rubbish like dead leaves cleared away and you will get less earwigs.

### *Slugs and Snails*

These pests like lettuces, cabbages and many other plants.

If your garden area is not too large, do a few after-dark checks through it by torch-light. Wear heavy gloves and have a bucket of soapy water (Use plain water if you have poultry!) to kill any you find.

Crushing the snails and slugs with your boot, or a piece of wood will kill them, but any mature eggs they are carrying will probably survive in their remains and then launch another generation of attackers!

**Warning:** Most snail baits contain metaldehyde which is poisonous for pets. Some baits have other active ingredients which are claimed to be safe but our vet reports they have had pets in severe distress brought to them and they do NOT think any baits they have seen are safe for dogs and cats.

Some copper products are effective for stopping snails and, possibly to a lesser extent, slugs. Again, our vet has not seen anything they would use but something may come along - **check with your vet first!**

## Best Plants for New Gardeners

### *Beans*

Beans have been a staple of home gardens through the years. There are beans which are grown as climbers and also bush varieties. Plenty of sun seems to be the "secret" of ensuring good crops.

As well as adding flavor and health benefits to your food, beans make more nitrogen available in your soil to benefit all the plants you grow in it.



Many gardeners grow their beans on strings or a trellis against a wall. This works best when the beans are not in shade.

Follow the directions on the packet. If you buy your seeds from a garden store, the staff will usually have local know-how about how to get good crops in your area and how long you will wait for them to be ready to pick (usually about 7 weeks). You need to know this so you will be available through the picking time.

Beans continue to produce for a while if you pick them. They will produce less if you leave some on the plants.

Plant new seeds or plants each year to get the best results.

### *Tomatoes*



Tomatoes are a good choice. The different sizes mean that you can grow some tomatoes in whatever area you have available. I've grown some in a couple of pots indoors. Many people grow larger varieties in large pots on balconies or near the door to the kitchen.

Tomatoes are a plant which gives us a variety of valuable nutrients and can be prepared and used in many different ways.

Hanging planters for tomatoes look great but they can be very heavy with the soil and plants. The weight increases markedly when the fruit starts to appear.

Make sure that you design a structure for supporting your hanging planter which is strong enough to take all the weight or you may have a serious problem at harvest time.

Growing small varieties in pots is something even children can do. This can help encourage them to eat foods they are not keen about if there are a couple of their own tomatoes with it!

It's a great feeling to pick a couple of small tomatoes from a pot to add to a casual sandwich or even just eat them by themselves.



### ***Carrots***

Carrots are easy to grow. You get better looking carrots if you loosen the soil before you plant them so they can grow straight down into the soil.

If the soil is compacted or contains rocks, your carrots may become misshapen but will still be tasty and nutritious.

### ***Spring Onions***

These thin upright stalks will produce more spring onions if you put the base and roots in a container of water for a couple of days and then plant into a container or garden bed when new growth has started to become established.

### ***Ginger***

Ginger is good for us as well as being very tasty. If you buy some ginger root, you can grow your own ginger by cutting off a small block which has a couple of eyes on it and planting it with the eyes upward or at the side.

That block should still be fresh. A dried-up or wrinkled piece will not thrive when replanted.

Leave part of the ginger exposed and keep the soil moist.

Be patient. Your new ginger will start to grow from the block after a few weeks.

If your location gets cold, you will need to protect the ginger plant. Bring it indoors during winter unless or it may die back.

### *Sweet Potatoes*

Stick some toothpicks into the outside of that end of the sweet potato instead of throwing it out and put it in a container so it is half-submerged. Put it in a warm spot where it will get as much sun as possible.

After a couple of weeks, you should see growth from both the top and underside of the old sweet potato. Then, you can cut into pieces, each having sprouts on them and look forward to harvesting your sweet potatoes when the new plants' leaves begin to turn yellow.

Then, you will be able to look forward to more free sweet potatoes each season from your own scraps!

### *Potatoes*

You can grow new plants from your own regular potatoes as well. You don't need to use any toothpicks. Just put the end of the potato with a couple of eyes on it in a small bowl and add enough water to cover most of the potato.

Leave the eyes above the water level.

The new plant can be put in a small bowl and remain a decoration for your room but it will not develop any potatoes unless you replant it in enough soil for the roots and potatoes to develop below the original piece.

Stop watering your potato plants when they start to wither and droop.

Don't leave tubers in your garden to sprout. Lift them carefully with a fork and store them in a cool dark place.

Store the potatoes you eat in the same sort of conditions. Some will last a while but there are a few varieties that should be eaten within a few days of being harvested.

## Herbs to Begin with

Herbs are a wide group of plants which add flavor and color to many dishes and your home as well.

Here are some of the easiest ones to begin with. They will usually give great results. That will encourage you to add more herbs to your collection and check your cook books for more ways to use the ones you start with.

I suggest that you use cuttings or plants to start your herbs from. This avoids the time you would wait for seeds to germinate and the shoots to get big enough to produce something you can use.

You will pay more for plants, unless you can get some from friends with a promise to share some of your other plants if they want cuttings, of course. But, the seeds need much more care and some will not survive the first stage.

Don't bother with poor quality plants or seeds. They may be cheap but you will wish you'd paid a bit extra for more healthy plants when you see the results you get.

If your soil is dry, you may need to add some vermiculite. You will need to break it up.

I recommend that you use a good quality garden fork for this sort of work. A spade requires much more effort and will tend to compact some of the soil.

Make sure that water can penetrate. Herbs vary in their need for water but all need it regularly.

### *Mint*

This is probably one of the most popular garnishes available. It is easy to grow. You should plant it in a pot or an area where it cannot keep spreading or it may take over a section of your garden!

Mint needs plenty of water but can handle sunlight and some shade better than many other plants. So, you can grow some mint indoors. Mint doesn't taste as nice when dried but you should be able to harvest some from your



plants almost the whole year round.

Start with spearmint and then you can try other varieties which particularly interest you later on.

Mint plants will cover a 2 foot area easily so you won't need many.

If you want to put your mint in the garden, but keep it confined, put it in a pot and have the soil level at least an inch below the edge of the pot. Then the mint will not be able to grow out of the pot and raid the surrounding area of your garden. Punch a few extra holes in the side of the pot near the bottom to improve drainage before you bury it in your garden.

### ***Dill***

Dill plants will each cover a 12 inch area so you won't need much room. The dill bush will produce well with only a little encouragement. The fragrance is a bonus from this lovely plant.

### ***Sage***

Sage is a vigorous plant . You need to keep pinching out new leaves through its growing period or it may become woody. Dry those leaves and put them away with a rubber band around each small clump. Then use them as you need them for cooking or craft work.

### ***Parsley***

Parsley is another easy to start with herbs. You can buy seed or plants. Seeds should shoot in about 4 weeks, not long to wait.

You will have to protect them from snails and other pests and weeds. They die down and go to seed but you will have had many times your money's worth from it in that time.

If you also grow some rocket and basil in pots, you can make your own pesto!

### ***Basil***

Basil is another good choice to begin with. It will signal a lack of water by letting its leaves droop. Don't worry, they'll recover if you give it enough

water in a reasonable time.

It is susceptible to mildew and needs plenty of water for its fleshy, edible parts.

Basil plants will cover a 3 foot area easily so you won't need many.

### *Thyme*

Thyme is a very valuable herb to grow. It is appealing to look at with green foliage and purple flowers. It does not need a lot of water.

## Safety in Your Garden

An important part of being a healthy gardener is ensuring that your garden is safe for all members of your family, including your pets.

### *A Family-friendly Garden*

Make sure that everybody who goes into the garden is careful to wear appropriate clothing and protective gear.

Everybody that does any gardening needs to have a regular preventative tetanus injection. Ask your doctor how long the shot will take to start protecting you. It is not safe to start your gardening until the injection becomes effective in your body,

Most accidents and many injuries which gardeners get come from using tools. They over-exert themselves or use poor quality tools which may break, causing an injury or put undue strain on the gardener instead of making the task easier and safer.

Electric equipment needs to be checked for faults and always use cords which are rated as safe for outdoor use. Ensure that extension cords have shock-absorbing cut-offs and get them checked regularly before use.

Wear clothes which cover and protect you from sunburn, insects and sharp tools.

Safety footwear with steel caps to protect your feet is available in the form of joggers and even formal dress shoes (used by bodyguards). So, you can get some which you can use for whatever tasks you are doing.

Numerous people injure their feet and hands because they don't wear sufficiently strong protection when operating lawn mowers and other dangerous gear.

Trousers need to be strong enough to protect you from flying rubbish and even small stones.

Gloves will not only protect you from contacting dirt and any poisons in it, they will give you some protection from blades and sharp points on the other

equipment you use.

Wear safety glasses when operating power equipment to prevent injury from flying debris. That includes even small line-trimmers which can send small pieces of line and other rubbish flying at your eyes at high speed.

Rotate between tasks so that you don't put too much pressure on the same areas of your body for too long. Give yourself a change and then finish that first task later in the day.

Avoid, as far as possible, doing too much during the hottest time of the day. This used to be between 10 am and 2 pm but check your weather forecast as it is often later on these days!

Discuss with your doctor what precautions which you might need to take when you are gardening.

Make sure you follow the general advice to bend your legs, not your back and don't over-exert yourself.

Take regular breaks from any heavy work you do and also give yourself some time away from the direct sun where you can apply some fresh sunscreen and get a cool drink.

Ordinary water is the best drink. Tea and coffee may be tastier but they will tend to raise your blood pressure.

Keep drinking water at regular intervals. Dehydration can have serious consequences to your health.

As well as the obvious risks from sprays and powders, there are other dangers in the garden area to be careful about.

Manure often carries diseases or other problems. Always use gloves. Change them when they become contaminated and dispose of the old ones if they may be hard to clean properly.

Always clean all tools used in a session before you put them away.

If you don't there are two possible dangers. If there is anything on the tools which could be harmful, you could come into contact with it in the storage

area when you don't have your gloves on.

And, if there is any disease or pest hidden in the tools, they may be transferred to other clean plants when you use those tools in another area.

## Garden Safety for Pets

The easiest way to make your garden safe for pets is to keep them out of it. Poisonous plants are the cause of many fatalities or serious problems for pets.

Sago Palms and other Cycads and mushrooms can cause liver failure. Rhododendrons, azaleas and many other plants can cause damage or worse to the heart.

There is a link to the A.S.P.C.A. list of dangerous plants in the resources section at the end of this book. All pet owners need to read it and take all necessary precautions.

Cocoa mulch contains the same ingredient which make chocolate deadly for dogs and possibly other pets. If you use it or cocoa coir, make sure it's not accessible to your pets.

That ingredient can build up in the animals body and the first sign you see could be your pet suddenly becoming very ill. At that stage, it may not be possible to make it fully well again.

Fertilizer can cause irritation of the pet's digestive tract and more serious complications, depending on the amount eaten. Don't take chances.

Don't let your pet get near any pesticide or other garden chemicals. Don't let them near containers you've used to apply the material, even after thoroughly washing them. Very little is needed to cause severe problems.

Make sure that your pets don't have too much time in the sun in a session. Give them some time in the shade. Get them a hat and bribe them to wear it. Then, remember to praise them for wearing it later on.

You can get sunscreen preparations which are better for animals than the kinds sold for human use. They probably have less color and perfume etc. Our vet says they should be used for the specified types of pets.

Have water available in a bowl which cannot be tipped over near the garden.

AND, make sure that the water in it cannot be contaminated by anything

which might make your pet unwell. Check the amount of water and cleanliness of the bowl regularly.

## Looking after Yourself

There are many things which you can do to make your garden a healthier and safer place.

Use trolleys to move heavy and awkward items.

Many people suffer serious injuries because they put more value on saving a few minutes above protecting their back or legs from injury which can cause physical and financial pain for years.

If you have a bench, always use it when you put seedlings in pots, or doing any other tasks where you need to bend over.

Buying quality tools will save you money after only a year or so. It can help prevent injury as well.

Poor quality tools can cause muscle ache because they put pressure on you instead of taking it from you.

They may break and cause injury as well.

You will usually spend more on replacing cheap tools than you would have cost to get quality items the first time.

Always clean your garden equipment thoroughly after each use.

If you don't get every bit of soil or other material off them, you could transfer disease or pest larvae onto the next lot of plants which you use the tools for.

Get equipment repaired before you need it. It will cost you less and also avoid not having it available when needed because the parts are not available then. Keep a couple of spare reels of trimmer cord on hand and replace it frequently to lower the risk of problems.

Keep batteries charged.

Lock away your flammable and poisonous materials. Clean up any spills; even a small one can seriously harm a child or a pet.

Always clean your garden clothing and shoes after each session. This helps to keep pests and disease being transferred between plants and also ensures



you get maximum life from the equipment you buy.

Don't forget to add any large or expensive tools to your household insurance list before you need to make a claim.

## Containers for Your Plants

If you buy all your containers, your costs will be much higher. But, you will avoid some potential problems as well.

Egg cartons are often mentioned for growing delicate seeds because their lack of strong fibers means they are not worth recycling. But, they are too small for many young plants and they dry out, meaning the plants don't have easy access to more water as they grow.

The best containers for use with delicate plants may be the peat pellets which you dampen so they grow to be pots which already contain growing medium and some nutrient.

They can be planted out without disturbing the young plant – no transfer shock!

Now there are more concerns raised because of environment cost of continuing peat mining, other containers should be used where possible.

You can use the core from toilet rolls or rolls of kitchen foil, greaseproof paper etc. With the longer cores, cut it to a suitable length for the type of plant you are starting and then put in some growing medium with the seed or seedling.

Then, when the plant is large enough, you can put the whole lot into the place where you want the plant. You can cut away the tube when the plant is a little bigger if it is necessary. Because you put some water on the developing plant, some tubes break down enough to let the roots push through anyway.

If you use more permanent containers, square ones will allow more even root development than round ones.

Some people use muffin trays and then just turn the tray over and tap the bottom to release the growing plants from it.

Always clean your permanent seed trays after each season to prevent the transfer of disease or even pest larvae to the new seedlings next season.

Recycle a few of your old wire coat hangers by cutting the center of the bottom bar and poking the cut ends into the garden at either side of the area where you have started your seedlings.

Then, fix some clear plastic over the coat hangers.

This gives the conditions of a small greenhouse at almost no cost. Just make sure that the heat does not become too much for your very young plants.

## Resources and Links

### *U.S.A.*

#### **Center for Disease Control and Prevention**

<http://www.cdc.gov/family/gardening>

This is part of the federal Department of Health and Human Services.

#### **USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map**

<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/ushzmap.html>

#### **A.S.P.C.A. LINKS pets and safe gardens**

##### **Toxic and Non-toxic Plants**

<http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants>

##### **Food which is dangerous for pets:**

<http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/people-foods-avoid-feeding-your-pets>

### *Australia*

#### **Australian Plant Hardiness Zone Map**

This map is on the Australian National Botanic Gardens website

<https://www.anbg.gov.au/gardens/research/hort.research/zones.html>

Parts were updated in 2010

I could not find a later version. They also note that the information is not perfect as there are not enough stations reporting to give definitive figures.

## **Preserving and Storing Food.**

I thought that including these links might be useful to some readers when they have more produce than they can eat or give away in a short time.

*U.S.A.*

### **Food Preservation.**

#### **USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning, 2009 revision**

[http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications\\_usda.html](http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications_usda.html)

United States Department of Agriculture Home Canning Guide. Online version can be downloaded as .pdf files. Printed version may be available for purchase.

#### **The National Center for Home Food Preservation**

<http://nchfp.uga.edu/>

From their website: "The N.C.H.F.P. is your source for current research-based recommendations for most methods of home food preservation."

They offer a book (\$US18) DVD's and a self-study course.

## **Companion Plants.**

### **City of Bradford District Council**

#### **Companion Plants**

[http://www.bradford.gov.uk/bmdc/leisure\\_and\\_culture/allotments/companion\\_plants](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/bmdc/leisure_and_culture/allotments/companion_plants)

The information in this article should be relevant to any other area in the World provided the plants which are suggested as companions will both grow in your location.

## **Gardeners Live Better and Healthier!**

The research all confirms that the person who gardens, whatever form their garden takes, can live a happier and healthier life.

I hope that this book will help and inspire you to enjoy your garden and share the joy of gardening with your family and friends.

A gardening club is a good place to get more help and meet enthusiastic and optimistic people – all gardeners need both characteristics.

Happy, healthy gardening!

***Will Johnson***

[Another eBookWholesaler Publication](#)