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Your Guide to a Successful and Beautiful Garden

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Your Guide to a Successful and Beautiful Garden

Tips for a Successful Garden

Gardening methods are as varied as the gardeners who use them, and it seems like every gardener has his or her own preferred method of achieving a beautiful garden. Many beginning gardeners find that the best way to learn how to garden is directly from an accomplished garden. One of the best ways to find those master gardeners is to join your local garden club. These clubs can be invaluable for the beginning gardener, as the members are able to swap tips and tricks picked up through years of successful gardening.

The importance of proper watering

One of the keys to a successful garden is to water the plants properly. A weekly deep watering is preferable to a daily spray with the hose, as most plants prefer a thorough but deep watering to a frequent more shallow source of water. One great watering method many gardeners use is a soaker hose. A soaker hose is a great way to make sure the roots of the plant get sufficient water.

Grow your own compost

Another thing many experienced gardeners have picked up is the importance of creating their own compost. Using a compost bin is a great way to recycle household waste and turn it into rich organic soil that will be useful for every plant. Items that can be successfully composted include leaves, kitchen scraps and other organic materials. A home compost bin is a great way to reduce the overflow of landfills while helping your garden grow its best.

Composting can also be a great way to balance the pH level of soil that is too acidic or too alkaline. High quality humus, which is the last step in the compost process, is a great, completely natural way to rebalance the pH of soil that has been damaged due to past neglect or chemical use. In addition, a good quality humus contains important nutrients such as iron, phosphorus and manganese, which are often lacking in commercially available fertilizers.

Cultivation methods

After the flowers have been planted, it is best to avoid further deep cultivation. Digging too deeply or too often in the soil can damage the roots of the plants, disturb valuable microorganisms, dry the soil and bring weeds to the surface. It is best to cultivate deeply when preparing the flower bed, then to leave things in place after the flowers have been planted.

Using color in the garden landscape

The beauty of flowers lies greatly in their bright, vibrant colors, and flowers can be used to enhance any landscape. When choosing flowers for the garden and landscape, it is best to choose colors that highlight and enhance those in the landscape. For instance,

combining bright, vibrant colors like reds and oranges with more soothing pastels can provide a striking contrast for any area of the garden.

In addition, it has become increasingly popular to combine the home garden with other landscape elements like ponds and waterfalls. These water elements provide a beautiful retreat from the stresses of everyday life.

Landscaping with flowers can even improve the value of your home. Studies have shown that a well landscaped exterior can enhance the resale value of the home, as well as provide a beautiful treat for the senses.

Picking the Best Flowers for Your Home Garden

Choosing the right flowers is one of the most critical decisions when planning a new garden, and combining colors and textures can make any garden a showplace. The many different colors and varieties of flowers for the garden makes finding the colors you like best very easy.

Of course plants should be chosen for their health and hardiness in addition to their beauty. When choosing seedlings for transplantation, it is important to choose only the healthiest, best looking seedlings, and to reject those that show any signs of disease or insect infestation. Choosing only the healthiest plants will make sure your new garden gets off to the right start.

Some problems with seedlings will be apparent even to the beginning gardener. For instance, it is easy to see things like spots on the leaves, holes in the leaves, or wounds in the stems. Other problems, however, are more subtle, and they may be easy to miss for the beginning gardener. If you are planning your first garden, you may want to take along a more experienced gardener, or solicit the advice of the nursery staff, to find the best seedlings for your needs.

As you browse around the garden center, be sure to carefully examine the flowers, the leaves, and the foliage of the plants you are considering. Look especially for white and black spots on the flowers, leaves and foliage, as these spots are often signs of a bacterial or fungal infection.

It is also important to be on the lookout for wilted leaves and waterlogged roots, as these can mean the plants will fail to thrive after they are planted. Plants with cut stems or other types of wounds should also be avoided.

Of course, finding the healthiest plants is only part of the battle. The other part is transplanting those seedlings properly, and caring for them once they are in the ground. It is always important to get the transplants into the garden as quickly as possible. When planting seedlings or young plants, the hole you dig should be slightly larger than the root ball of the plant. Making the hole larger will ensure that the plant can be

placed into the ground without disturbing the delicate root structure. After the plant is in place, the earth should be gently tamped down, and the plant should be given plenty of water and fertilizer.

When starting a new garden, it is also a good idea to have a good soil analysis done before buying your first plants. A soil analysis will tell you if your soil is of sufficient quality, and help you be sure that it contains the nutrients your plants will need. A soil analysis will also spot common problems, such as soil that is too acidic, too alkaline, too sandy, contains too much clay, etc. There are ways to fix all these problems, but it is important to have a soil analysis done so you know how to correct any problems found.

In addition, understanding the type of soil you have can help you to choose the plants that will do best in that soil. Tailoring the plants you select to the soil you have is a great way to reduce the use of pesticides and other chemicals while still enjoying a healthy and robust garden.

Starting your Seeds the Right Way

When it comes to gardening, gardeners are of two minds. While some gardeners prefer to buy young seedlings and transplant them in the garden, other gardeners prefer the control and the sense of accomplishment that comes with planting flowers and plants directly from seeds.

Planting from seed has a lot to recommend it. For one thing, although transplanting seedlings can provide a good head start for the gardener, it can also introduce problems like disease or insect infestation to an established garden plot.

Planting from seed helps gardeners to avoid these problems. It is not difficult to plant from seed, but it is vital to read and follow the instructions on the seed packet for best results. As with other types of gardening, it is important to follow the instructions carefully. It is also important to protect the seeds and the delicate seedlings as they grow.

Whenever you plant seeds, it is a good idea to use a quality growing tray. It is important to choose the right growing tray, and you can get recommendations from your local nursery or garden center on the best type of tray for your needs. After you have the tray and the seeds in hand, the next step is to fill that growing tray with a high quality seed mixture. This type of product is also called a seed starting mix, and it is similar in consistency to potting soil. Another advantage of the seed starting mix is that it is sterile, and free of diseases and garden pests.

After the growing tray has been prepared, the seeds should then be placed in the seed starting mix. The rule of thumb when planting seeds is to plant them at least twice their own depth. In some cases, such as with very small seeds, you may want to simply dust

the seeds with a light coating of seed mix, since if they are buried too deep they may not be able to sprout.

After the seeds have been planted in the tray, they should be labeled, using either sticks printed with a waterproof marker or actual nursery labels. Do not use the seed packets as labels, since they will quickly disintegrate from moisture as the seeds are watered.

Only a misting sprayer should be used to provide water to the newly planted seeds. If you use a hose or watering can, you could inadvertently dislodge the seed medium or uncover the seeds. The growing tray should be covered in order to prevent the moisture from evaporating. A covered tray will also encourage the germination of the seeds.

Another thing that can speed up the germination of newly planted seeds is heat. Heat has been shown to speed up the germination of seeds, and this is a technique used by many successful gardeners. Another favorite technique of gardeners is to use a bell jar to protect delicate seedlings from late frost. If bell jars cannot be found, a regular water bottle with the bottom cut off makes a good replacement.

Using Popular Rose Varieties in Your Garden

When many people think of gardening, their thoughts turn first to roses, and there is no wonder. Roses are among the most popular, and certainly most beautiful, types of flowers there are. In addition, roses are a huge part of both the gardening hobby and the professional flower business. There are even rose and flowers shows where master gardeners proudly show off their lovely creations to an awestruck crowd.

Whether your ultimate goal is to take the big prize at the next rose show or just enjoy a few roses in your garden, it is important to get a feel for the many varieties of roses on the market. Roses are among the most varied flowers on the market; they come in virtually every color of the rainbow and in blooms ranging in size from a fraction of an inch to almost a foot in width. This article focuses on a few of the most commonly seen rose varieties.

Pimpinellifolia Roses

Pimpinellifolia roses are renowned for their hardiness, and their attractive foliage and lovely blooms make them a great choice for the beginning rose enthusiast or the experienced gardener. These roses come in pink, red, yellow and white blossoms, and they grow on attractive and very compact bushes.

Boursault Roses

Boursault roses are of the climbing variety, and they are said to be the result of a cross between an early variety of China rose and the R. Pendulina rose. This cross is thought to have occurred during the reign of Napoleon, who was a well known rose enthusiast. The blossoms of this rose are somewhat large, and they grow in either small or large

clusters depending on the variety. The blooms come in various shades of pink and red. Many varieties can reblossom later in the season.

Sempervirens Roses

The Sempervirens is similar to the Boursault, in that it is also a climbing rose. The Sempervirens originated in the Mediterranean region of the world, and it has large leaves accented by small white flowers which grow in large clusters. This variety of rose was studied extensively by rose enthusiasts as far back as 1820, and it continues to be one of the most popular varieties of climbing rose on the market today. This variety of rose is seen in various shades of pink and white.

Setigera Roses

The Setigera variety of rose, known to the scientific community as *R. setigera*, has a reputation for being a hardy and tough plant. That hardiness may be due to the fact that *R. setigera* comes from the prairie region of the United States, a difficult environment to say the least. The setigera rose has been used in breeding programs to create many very hardy varieties of climbing roses, most notably the crosses with the Noisettes and Gallicas varieties.

Wichuraiana Roses

The Wichuraiana rose, also known as *R. wichuraiana*, is a frequently seen wide spreading cluster rose. It is used both as a climbing rose and as an attractive ground cover.

Using Roses in the Landscape

Roses have many uses in the home garden, both as standalone bushes and climbers and as part of an overall landscape of plants and flowers. The newest thinking in landscape gardening is to combine roses with other types of native plants and flowers, and roses certainly lend themselves to a striking place in the garden.

Roses are also wonderful when used to enhance and highlight areas of the home or surrounding landscape. For instance, climbing roses can be trained to grow up and over a trellis or to highlight and enhance a bare wall or garden shed. In addition, a spray of yellow roses growing against a brick or stone home can be a beautiful addition to the landscape.

Landscaping with roses is one of the best ways to add beauty to the home, and even to enhance its value. Before you can landscape effectively with roses, however, it is important to determine just where roses will fit in your landscape, and how best to use them. Landscaping with roses is not difficult, but it is important to plan properly before the first rosebush goes into the ground.

Planning for next spring's garden should begin the winter before the garden is to be planted. Planning early allows you to determine the best location for the roses in the garden, and to research the varieties that are most likely to thrive in your climate.

It is also important to ask yourself what you want to get out of your roses. Roses can be used for many different reasons, from providing an attractive ground cover to providing a dramatic backdrop for a beautiful home.

Planning is also important in order to prevent rose specific problems. There are, for instance, a number of pests and diseases that are specific to roses, and it is important to take steps to prevent those problems before planting your roses. It is also important to ask yourself how much time you have to devote to growing roses, since some varieties are harder to grow than others. If your time is limited, it may be best to stick to hardier, easier to grow varieties.

It is also important to choose roses in colors that will best highlight your home and exterior landscape. For instance, a spray of white roses can be quite striking against a dark colored home, just as red roses can beautifully compliment a white exterior.

It is also important to examine your landscape and determine which roses will work best where. For example, hybrid musk roses grow well even in less than full sun, so they are often used in shady areas. It is important to note, however, that hybrid musk roses do not do as well in colder climates. It is important to take your own climate into account, as well as sun and shade considerations, when planning your rose landscape.

Lilies for the Garden

Lilies are one of the most striking and beautiful plants in a garden, and most gardeners will work with these beautiful plants at least once or twice in their lives. Lilies can add beauty and drama to any garden, and they are very popular flowers for indoor display as well. Lilies are popular in many contexts, from giving a beautiful contrast to a winter rock garden, to providing a beautiful accent to surrounding shrubs and trees.

No matter how the lily is displayed, and whether it is enjoyed indoors or out, there are some important things to know about these wonderful plants. This article focuses on some of the most frequently asked questions about choosing, planting, caring for and enjoying lilies.

When should I plant my lilies?

The best time to plant lilies is in either the spring or fall of the year. Regardless of the time of year, however, it is important to get the bulbs in the ground as soon as possible after purchasing them. Unlike many other types of bulbs, lily bulbs do not store well.

What is the difference between a daylily and a garden lily?

The plant known to gardeners as the garden lily is grown from a bulb, but the plant known as the daylily actually grows from a corm. In addition, the daylily contains many leaves that grow from the corm, but the garden lily contains only one shoot that contains leaves. That shoot grows directly from the bulb.

How deep should lily bulbs be planted?

The general rule of thumb for many types of bulbs, including lily bulbs, is to plant them three times as deep as the bulbs are wide. For instance, a two inch wide lily bulb would be planted to a depth of six inches. In addition, lilies should be planted in groups for the best effect when they bloom. It is a good idea to dig a hole to the proper depth, then plant several bulbs together in that hole.

How do I propagate lilies?

Garden lilies are best propagated through breaking off a few of their scales in the spring or fall and planting them approximately one inch deep. Daylilies can be propagated by dividing the corms and planting them. In addition, some lilies will produce bulbils, which may appear to be black or dark green seeds. These bulbils are found at the point at which the lily leaf meets the stem. Even though these bulbils are not really seeds, they can be planted, and they will emerge within two or three years of planting.

Should I cut back my lily after it has finished blooming?

After the lily has bloomed, it is best to remove only the stem itself. That is because garden lilies will continue to feed off their foliage, and lilies that are left to die off naturally tend to grow better the next year. On the other hand, daylilies usually bloom for longer periods of time. The blooming season of daylilies can be extended if the gardener deadheads the blooms and cuts back the stems. After the blooming season is over, the foliage on the daylily should be allowed to die back naturally.

Can Easter lilies be planted outside?

Many people are interested in planting their Easter lilies outside, and it is fine to attempt that. The main problem with Easter lilies is that they do not bloom naturally at Easter time. Easter lilies are actually forced to bloom at that time of year by the florist. This forced blooming can make it harder for the lily to grow properly once it is transplanted.

If you plan to transplant your Easter lily after you have enjoyed it outside, the following steps will help increase your chances of its survival.

- Plant the lily in a sunny spot using well drained soil
- Use a good, high quality planting mix
- Plant the bulbs three inches under the surface of the soil and also place an additional three inches of soil on the top
- Allow enough space for the lily to spread its roots
- Water the newly transplanted lily thoroughly

Working with Dahlias

Dahlias are among the most beautiful and most exotic residents of any garden. The large blooms of the dahlia are impossible to ignore, and they stand out in any garden in which they are planted. The sturdy, large blooms of the dahlia are available in a variety of colors, and in sizes ranging from as small as an inch to as large as a foot. In addition, the flowers themselves come in a variety of shapes. Some dahlia blooms are shaped like baseballs, while others curve back on themselves to where they nearly touch their stems.

Dahlias are known as sun loving plants, and they definitely do better with sufficient sunlight. Gardeners recommend providing dahlias with at least a half day of sunlight every day. In addition, dahlias need enough water to thrive, and most varieties require from one to two inches of rain, from either rainfall or artificial watering, every week.

In addition, dahlias need a good rich soil with plenty of organic material, a regular pruning schedule, a good insecticide to protect them from beetles and grasshoppers and possibly staking as the plants grow ever taller. In addition, dahlias should be fed with a quality low nitrogen fertilizer as needed.

Dahlias are actually grown from a tuber, a bulb like structure, and dahlias are actually classified as bulb plants. It is best to plant dahlias near the beginning of June, and those dahlias will usually bloom around October. Dahlias can be planted earlier in the season as well, and those dahlias will provide late summer blossoms. Dahlias should be dug up after the first frost of the year. After being dug up, the dahlias should be divided and stored for the winter. Doing so will allow the gardener to replant the dahlia tuber the following year.

Dahlias come in a great many varieties, but one of the most popular varieties is the David George. The David George variety of dahlia features a bloom of deep red color and medium size. Other popular dahlia varieties include the Bonaventure, featuring large bronze colored flowers, and the Allie Yellow, with features a tiny yellow bloom.

In addition to staples like orchids and roses, dahlias are often seen at flower shows, and many gardeners grow dahlias purely for these competitions. A prize dahlia can certainly be the star of any flower show, due to their striking beauty and large size.

Enhance your Garden with Sunflowers

Sunflowers are certainly stars of the gardening world. It is hard to miss the beauty of sunflowers standing tall, either on their own or edging a bed of more traditional flowers. Few who have seen these stunning beauties can deny their stunning beauty and attractiveness.

The family of sunflowers, known scientifically as genus *Helianthus*, includes both annual and perennial varieties of sunflowers. As their name implies, sunflowers generally prefer full sunlight, so it is important for gardeners to choose the sunniest part of their garden when planting these stunning plants.

It is also important to take the adult size of these plants into account when planting them, and to space them accordingly. Most varieties of sunflowers are quite large, so it is important to space them widely so they will not crowd each other out and compete for nutrients.

Since sunflowers are so large and sturdy, many gardeners like to use them to border vegetable gardens, and a vegetable garden bordered by sunflowers is certainly a beautiful sight.

The blooming period of sunflowers typically extends from late summer to early fall, and the growing requirements for these plants are generally easy to meet. Most varieties of sunflowers require only a well drained, modestly fertile soil in order to thrive. It is generally a good idea to amend the soil with either aged manure or a good quality commercial fertilizer. It is best to sow the sunflower seeds directly where they are intended to grow, since they set seed quickly and start to sprout very fast.

While sunflowers may be easy to grow, their seeds are popular with many unwanted garden visitors, particularly rabbits, squirrels and insects. Due to this popularity with common garden pests, it is best to sow three times as many seeds as are needed. Planting extra seeds will allow the four legged visitors to your garden to eat their fill while still providing a beautiful garden full of sunflowers.

Sunflower seeds are best planted about a foot apart. Sowing the seeds this far apart will allow the adult plants to grow the largest heads. If you plant sunflowers closer together they will develop smaller blooms and may never reach their full potential. If you are growing sunflowers for those monstrous blossoms, it is important to give them plenty of space to grow.

When working with annual varieties of sunflowers, it is important to rotate the planting area. This will keep the soil its healthiest and allow the sunflowers to achieve their best blooms.

There are many places to buy quality sunflower seeds, including the internet, mail order houses and local garden centers. As with any flower seeds, it is important to follow the planting instructions carefully to achieve the best results from these spectacular plants.

Understanding the Role of Insects in Gardening

While many types of insects, birds and animals seen in the home are unwanted intruders, others play a vital role in pollinating plants and moving seeds from one place

to another. In fact, without these animal and insect helpers, most plants would be unable to reproduce.

Even though most gardeners understand how important this cycle of pollination and seed dispersal is, few fully understand why it occurs, or how it benefits both the plants and the animals.

The rewards of pollination and seed dispersal to the plants are easy to determine - they get to spread their seeds far and wide, and start new plants in far off locations. The rewards the insects, birds and mammals derive are many as well, and they include:

Nectar - nectar is actually a sugary solution, and therefore it is highly prized by all kinds of animals both for its good taste and for the ample energy it provides. Getting at this nectar is what prompts most pollinating insects, birds and animals to do such a good job. Nature has provided plants with various ways to attract pollinating insects, birds and animals. Many types of flowers store their nectar in special glands called nectaries.

These nectar glands are most frequently found in flowers, but they are also sometimes contained in leaves or other parts of the plant as well. Most plants are designed to protect their nectar stores from non-pollinating insects and animals, through the use of special storage locations that only pollinating insects can reach, for instance.

The use of nectar and the plants, insects, birds and animals that depend on it is a fascinating study in co-evolution. The sugar concentrations of many plant nectars have evolved to match the energy requirements of the types of animals, birds and insects that pollinate them. For instance, bees require a 30-35% concentration of sugar in order to make the honey needed by their larvae in the winter. Therefore, bees will not visit flowers whose nectar contains less than 30% sugar. Therefore, the flowers and plants that depend on bees for pollination have evolved high concentrations of sugar in their nectar to attract these pollinators.

Pollen - Pollen is also used by flowers and plants to attract the insects, birds and animals they need. Pollen is eaten by bees, and it is also used to make a substance called bee bread, which is a high protein combination of pollen and nectar. This bee bread is used to feed the larvae, which require a high concentration of protein to grow and thrive. Some plants, such as peonies, poppies and roses, use only pollen as a reward and produce no nectar at all.

Other types of plants produce two types of pollen - their normal pollen and a sterile pollen which is attractive to pollinating insects. This evolutionary strategy ensures that the good tasting pollen will be eaten while the reproductive pollen will be spread to other areas by the insects, birds and animals that visit the plant.

Of course, this pollen and nectar does the plants no good if the birds, insects and animals cannot find it, and plants and flowers use their bright colors and strong scents to attract these animals and let them know that pollen, nectar, or both await them.

Some pollinating species rely primarily on their sense of sight, and the bright flowers are used to attract their attention. Other species, particularly nocturnal ones, rely primarily on smell. It is the scent of the flowers that attracts these scent oriented pollinators.

The Importance of Proper Soil Chemistry to a Healthy Garden

Trying to grow healthy, vibrant flowers without proper soil chemistry is definitely a case of putting the cart before the horse. Good soil is the cornerstone of successful gardening, and it is important to make sure that your soil will meet the needs of your plants before the first seed is planted.

While soil chemistry is important no matter what types of plants or flowers you grow, it is particularly critical when it comes to working with bulbs, perennials or other plants that remain in the ground for than one season. The reason is that the chemistry of the soil can change from year to year. Therefore, if a formerly well blooming patch of the garden is looking a bit haggard, the first place to look is at the condition of the soil. Erosion, overuse of pesticides and fertilizers and a number of other factors can impact the quality of the soil, so it is important to test the soil if you suspect a problem.

Of course the soil should be tested anytime a new flower bed is prepared as well. It would be a mistake to assume that the soil chemistry is the same everywhere on your property, since the makeup of different patches of soil can be markedly different, due to past use, chemicals or residue in the ground, etc.

It is a good idea to have a thorough soil analysis done prior to planting a bed of flowers. Most major cities have several laboratories that do soil testing, so be sure to contact such a lab to have the soil analyzed for pH level, and for levels of important plant nutrients. If you are unsure where to get the soil tested, be sure to ask the staff at your local nursery or garden center for a recommendation.

After the present condition of the soil is known, you will be in a much better position to know how to amend the soil and make the changes that are needed. Once you know the pH level, the level of organic material in the soil, the amount of clay, amount of sand, etc., you will be able to choose the right additives to provide your plants with what they need to thrive.

The pH level of the soil can be a particularly critical factor when deciding what types of plants will work best. Most varieties of annuals, perennials and bulbs will grow well in a wide range of soil pH, but some plants have specific needs, and prefer soils that are either very alkaline or very acidic. If your pH range is outside the norm, or if it needs to be amended, there are a number of ways to accomplish this goal. For instance, limestone can be used to make acidic soil more alkaline, while sulfur is often used to make very alkaline soil more acidic. A pH level that is out of balance can also be helped by adding humus. This rich soil can be created at home by using a compost bin, or it can be purchased ready made from a garden center or nursery.

After you know the baseline content of your flower bed, it will be easier to track chemistry changes from year to year, and to make amendments as needed. The more you know about the quality of your soil, the more confident you can be that the plants you buy will thrive in your home garden.

Preventing Disease in Your Garden

Preventing disease, and controlling any diseases that do occur, is a vital part of building a successful garden. Whether you are a casual weekend gardener or a grower of championship blooms, keeping your garden healthy is important.

Of course the best way to enjoy a healthy garden year after year is to keep your plants as healthy and well cared for as possible. Healthier plants are better able to fight off infections and resist damage by common insects.

Unfortunately, however, there are a number of common plant ailments that are entirely beyond the control of even the best gardener. The common bacterial infection known as fireblight, for instance, can easily penetrate plants if it rains at the right time of year. In order to prevent this infection, the gardener would need to be able to control the weather, and this is one thing that is definitely beyond their control.

In addition, other common plant ailments are difficult to detect at first. For instance, the mosaic virus, which often affects bare root roses, rarely displays any symptoms that would notify the gardener of its presence until it is too late.

In order to protect your garden from disease and keep your plants vigorous and healthy, it is important to follow these important steps:

1. Keep your plants as healthy and vigorous as possible through providing the recommended amounts of water, fertilizer and sunlight. The staff at your local nursery or garden center can provide you with information on the specific growth needs of each plant you buy.
2. Buy disease-resistant varieties of plants whenever possible. Seed packets and seedlings at the nursery are labeled to show their resistance to various common plant ailments.
3. It is important to avoid damaging the roots as you transplant the seedlings. That is because damage to the plant's root system is a major cause of disease and other issues that can prevent plants from reaching their full potential.
4. When working in the garden, be careful not to injure the plants as you work. It is important to exercise caution when weeding, fertilizing, tilling the soil, etc. Damaged stems and roots are a leading source of bacterial and fungal infections.
5. If at all possible, avoid working in the garden when the weather is very damp. Dampness can spread disease and fungus, and it is easy for the gardener to unknowingly spread infections among the plants.
6. If possible, use either a drip irrigation system or a soaker hose when watering plants. These two watering methods help to avoid getting water on the leaves and flowers. Standing water on plants is a leading source of fungal and bacterial infections. Furthermore, standing water makes it easy for infections to spread from one plant to another.
7. Any diseased plants should be removed from the garden immediately. It is important to remove any diseased plants from the garden and replace them with hardier varieties. Doing so is the best way to prevent an infection from spreading.

8. Any diseased plants should be disposed of immediately with the regular household trash. It is important not to mulch the infected plants, or add them to a compost bin. While many disease causing organisms are destroyed by the heat of decomposition in the compost bin, some are able to survive. It is always best to not take the chance that composted materials could reinfect the garden bed.
9. Keep your garden clean. A clean garden is less susceptible to infection. It is always a good idea to perform a thorough cleaning after every growing season. This includes removing weeds and dead plant parts, since some plant pathogens are able to survive the cold of winter.

Common Plant and Flower Diseases

Everyone who gardens will sooner or later have to deal with common diseases of plants and flowers. While some gardeners are luckier than others in this regard, everyone, from the smallest casual gardener to the largest commercial growing operation, has had to grapple with this serious issue.

Both flowering and non-flowering plants are prone to a number of pathogens, including bacteria, fungi and viruses. Fungi are able to survive in the soil, independent of the plants, while both bacteria and viruses require a plant host for their survival.

Fungi

Fungi are among the most primitive of all organisms, and they are able to reproduce through the use of spores. These spores can be extremely difficult to kill, and the spores are designed to spread rapidly. Fungi produce spores in large numbers, and some of the spores are able to enter plants through their roots, while other spores attach themselves to the leaves of the plant. A single infected plant can release up to 100 million spores, so it is important to completely eradicate any fungal infection.

Bacteria

Unlike fungi, which can lie dormant for years or even decades in the soil, bacteria need both warmth and water to multiply and grow. Therefore, the majority of bacterial diseases are more of a problem in climates that are both warm and wet. Bacterial infections are easily spread through rain, splashing water, and even unknowingly by gardeners as they move between their plants. Most bacteria enter plants through a natural opening like a flower, or through a wound or cut in a stem or leaf.

Viruses

Viruses are even smaller life forms than bacteria, and they are able to reproduce only from within the cells of the plant or animal they infect. Certain viruses can be transmitted from plant to plant by insects such as aphids, thrips and leafhoppers, while still others can be carried by infected seeds or pollen spores. Like bacteria, viruses often enter plants through cuts or wounds in the stems, leaves or other parts of the plant.

As with all other disease treatment, the first step to effectively treating a viral, bacterial or fungal infection in the garden is to diagnose it properly. Every gardener should keep a book or guide on hand which shows the effects of common plant diseases. This guide will prove invaluable when trying to figure out what is bothering your plants. If you are still stumped for a diagnosis, be sure to seek the assistance of the staff at your local garden center, or the help of a more experienced gardener.

When treating bacterial, fungal and viral infections, the best approach is to try the most natural, least invasive methods first, and to move on only if those natural cures do not produce results. It is always a good idea to keep the use of harsh chemical pesticides and fungicides to a minimum, both for the health of your garden and the health of the wider environment.

Using Fungicides to Prevent and Treat Common Plant and Flower Diseases

Gardening is a wonderful, relaxing hobby for many people, and it continues to top surveys of favorite leisure activities. Most of the time a garden provides a soothing, relaxing environment, and healthy, attractive plants. As with any living thing, however, flowers and plants are prone to a number of diseases and pest infestations. It is important to use commercial fungicides properly to banish disease from your garden.

Simply paying attention to the condition of the plants in your garden may be the best way to keep disease outbreaks at bay. After you have been gardening for awhile, you will develop a feel for what is normal, and that will make it much easier to spot any outbreaks before they spread throughout the garden.

In addition, simply keeping the plants in top condition is a great way to prevent disease. Just as healthier people are better able to fight off infection, so too are healthier plants. The better the condition of your plants, the more they will be able to fight off disease.

Even the healthiest plants, however, sometimes succumb to disease, so it is important to be on the lookout for the first signs of problems so that they can be treated promptly. Symptoms like holes in the leaves, black spots, white spots and wounded stems can be signs of trouble. If you notice any of these conditions, it is important to diagnose and treat the affected plants as quickly as possible. This is because an outbreak of disease, or a pest infestation, can quickly spread throughout the garden.

Many of the most common diseases of flowers and plants are fungal diseases, and these diseases are best treated with a high quality synthetic fungicide. There are a great many fungicides on the market, and we are providing a list of some of the most popular and well known fungicides. If you are unsure of the nature of your plant disease, it is important to seek the help of the staff at your local garden center, or consult with a more experienced gardener.

It is important to note that the fungicide Chlorothalonil slowly dissipates with time, but the other fungicides on this list are systemic. Their systemic nature means that once they are applied to the plant, they are absorbed into the foliage and the root system. A systemic fungicide works to prevent and cure infection from within the plant itself. Because of this property, it is important never to use a systemic fungicide on plants intended for food.

Some of the most commonly used fungicides are:

Chlorothalonil (Daconil) - Chlorothalonil is a multipurpose fungicide with is used to prevent and treat common fungal diseases which affect lawns, fruits, vegetables as well as many ornamental and flowering plants.

Thiophanate-methyl - Thiophanate-methyl is a systemic fungicide that is effective in treating many common plant diseases, including powdery mildew and black spot.

Triadimefon (Bayleton) - Triadimefon is a systemic fungicide which is usually used to prevent and treat powdery mildew and rust. It is also effective against some lawn diseases.

Triforine (Funginex) - Triforine is a systemic fungicide used to treat and prevent common fungal diseases such as rust, black spot and powdery mildew. It has also proven effective against some other diseases of both flowering and non-flowering plants.

When working with any chemical, including systemic and non-systemic fungicides, it is vital to follow the direction carefully and to use the minimum effective amount. Pay particular attention to any warnings on the label, and dispose of any unused product carefully. It is important to wear protective clothing, such as a breathing mask, goggles and gloves for protection while applying any fungicide.

Growing the Best Flowers in Town

Every gardener wants to grow the most perfect, most beautiful flowers in town, but that goal is to be elusive. Whether your goal is to win the best bloom award at the big flower show or just to enjoy a garden full of beautiful flowers, there are some steps you can take to make sure your garden is the best it can be.

Pay attention to chemistry

The chemistry of the soil is one of the most critical factors to the success, or lack of success, in the home garden. If the soil in your area is poor, chances are you will be unable to grow those beautiful blooms until the soil has been amended to provide the nutrition the plants need.

One mistake many gardeners make is to assume that the soil chemistry will be the same all over their property. It is important to have each part of your property you plan to use for flower growing tested, especially if the areas are far apart. This can be

particularly important if part of your property lies on a downhill slope, or if it has been used for other purposes in the past.

It is also important to take into consideration such things as the slope of the land and the type of soil in your area. A thorough soil analysis will give you a good baseline to go by and a great way to monitor the quality of the land as your garden grows.

Know what your plants require

Chances are you already have some plants in mind for your new garden, and if so it is important to understand what those plants need in order to thrive. While most common varieties of annuals, perennials and bulbs will grow in a wide range of conditions, some other varieties can be a bit more demanding.

If you plan to grow roses in your garden, for instance, it is a good idea to know the pH level of your soil, and amend it if necessary. Most roses are acid loving plants, and therefore they may not grow properly in soil that is very alkaline. The good news is that alkaline soil can often be brought into balance by adding a good quality humus and working it through the soil. If the humus alone is not sufficient, the addition of sulfur to the soil can often help turn the soil more acidic.

Watch the nutrition

The nutrients contained within the soil are also vital to the success of your garden. For instance, if the levels of phosphorus, nitrogen and other organic matter is not high enough, your plants may not get the nutrition they need to grow and bloom. Nutrients can be added to poor soil through the use of humus, or by using a good, high quality organic fertilizer.

You can see why soil chemistry is such an important first step toward growing the perfect garden. Growing the best flowers in town is a worthy goal. Be sure your soil is up to the task.

There is no doubt that gardening can be a relaxing, rewarding and fulfilling hobby for every person. Whether you are a beginning gardener or already have a certified green thumb, there is nothing quite as exciting as seeing the seeds you have so lovingly sown spring forth into beautiful blossoms.

We hope this guide will help you get even more enjoyment from your gardening hobby.

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