How to Start a Garden

Home and Garden · about 14 minutes · 2026-11-08

Start a garden that survives its first season: light, soil, water, spacing and a planting plan matched to your climate and available time.

Things you will need

- Sunlight (6-8 hours daily for most plants)
- Garden soil or raised bed soil mix
- Seeds or transplants (choose varieties for your zone)
- Hand trowel and garden fork
- Pruning shears (clean and sharp)
- Watering can or hose with spray nozzle
- Garden mulch (straw, wood chips, or shredded leaves)
- Organic compost
- Garden fertilizer (balanced organic formula)
- Mulch or compost bin
- Garden labels and markers
- Garden kneeler or pad
- Neem oil or insecticidal soap (for pest control)
- Seed starting kit (for indoor seed starting)
- Garden journal or notebook

Planning Your Garden

1. **Choose Your Garden Type**
   Start by deciding what kind of garden you want to create.
2. **Define Your Garden Goals**
   Clarify what you want to achieve with your garden.
3. **Research Your Climate and Soil**
   Understand your local climate and soil conditions before planting anything.
4. **Plan Your Garden Layout**
   Draw a detailed layout of your garden before planting.
5. **Build Raised Beds or Containers**
   Construct raised garden beds or container planters before filling them with soil.

Preparing Your Garden Space

6. **Choose Your Garden Location**
   Select the best spot for your garden based on sun, water access, and soil quality.
7. **Clear and Prepare the Site**
   Clear the area of weeds, rocks, and debris before planting.
8. **Set Your Garden Budget**
   Create a realistic budget for your garden project.

9. Choose Your Plants

Select plants that match your garden type, climate, and goals.

10. Install Irrigation

Set up an irrigation system to keep your garden consistently watered.

11. Plant Your Seeds

Follow seed packet instructions for planting depth and spacing.

Planting Your Garden

12. Gather Gardening Tools

Equip yourself with the right gardening tools before planting.

13. Plant Your Transplants

When transplanting seedlings or nursery plants, harden them off first — place them outdoors in sheltered spots for 3-7 days before planting to acclimate to outdoor conditions.

14. Add Mulch and Compost

Apply a 2-3 inch layer of mulch around your plants to conserve moisture, suppress weeds, and regulate soil temperature.

15. Establish a Watering Routine

Develop a consistent watering routine for your garden.

16. Water Your New Plants

Give extra attention to newly planted seeds and transplants — they need consistent moisture to establish roots.

Maintaining Your Garden

17. Weed Your Garden

Remove weeds regularly to keep your garden healthy and productive.

18. Prune and Deadhead

Prune your plants regularly to promote healthy growth and maximize yields.

19. Fertilize Your Plants

Feed your plants with the right nutrients for healthy growth and abundant harvests.

20. Monitor for Pests and Diseases

Check your plants regularly for signs of pests and diseases — early detection prevents major problems.

21. Compost Your Garden Waste

Start composting garden waste to create rich, organic soil amendment.

22. Harvest Your First Crops

Harvest your vegetables and herbs at the right time for the best flavor and yield.

Expanding Your Garden

23. Expand Your Garden Beds

Once your current garden is established and thriving, consider expanding it.

24. Save Seeds for Next Season

Save seeds from your best plants for next year's garden — it is free, fun, and preserves varieties you love.

25. Share Your Garden Harvest

Share your garden bounty with friends, family, and community.

26. Plan for Next Season

Reflect on this season's successes and failures, then plan for next year.

27. Join a Gardening Community

Connect with other gardeners to learn, share, and grow together.

28. Create a Garden Journal

Start a garden journal to track your gardening journey.

Sources

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Written as a checklist from https://www.howcompass.com/how-to/Start-a-Garden. Corrections: https://www.howcompass.com/corrections