

Garden Planning



Goals

Are you hoping to grow flowers, food, or something else? Make sure to know your goals before beginning your garden journey.

Soil

Where will your soil come from? If you are planting directly into existing soil, make sure to have your soil tested for heavy metals and nutrient levels. Look for local sources of compost you can use to amend your soil. Calculate the amount of soil you're going to need before you begin.

Water

Consider how you will provide your plants with water; is there a hose nearby? Will you get a watering wand to ease the impact on your body? Does your soil drain water quickly? Water enough to saturate the soil ~1" below ground, but remember plant roots need air too!

Sunlight

Pay attention to which parts of your space receive the most sunlight. You can use apps to figure out where the sun and shadows will be during the growing season, and plan your planting accordingly. Some plants are more shade tolerant than others.



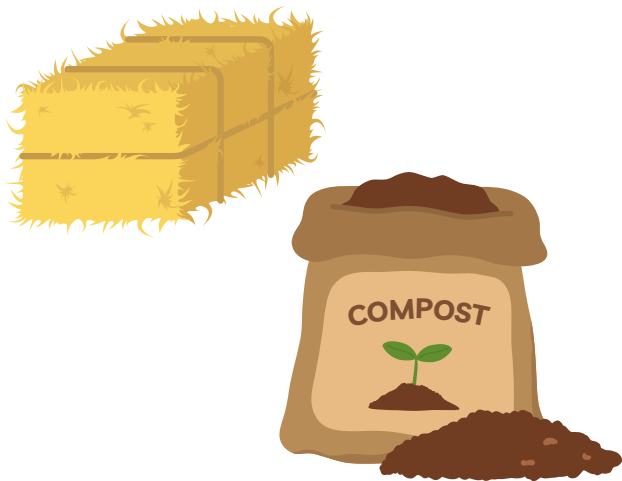
Map It

Look at your space and create a birds-eye view of your garden. Then label what you will plant in each area. In future years, this will help you to rotate your plants and avoid exhausting your garden soil.

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Seedlings

At least two months before the growing season decide if you plan to start your own seedlings or purchase them from a greenhouse or garden supplier. Follow a guide if it is your first time starting seeds.



Adding Nutrients

Most plants benefit from nutrient input throughout the season. You can add nutrients by layering compost and mulch or straw on top of your garden beds. Avoid mulches with artificial dyes. Use organic fertilizers to avoid killing helpful bacteria and fungi in the soil.

Responsibilities

A crucial part of a successful garden is checking on the plants on a regular schedule and tending to their needs. If you're creating a home garden it's very important to discuss who will be taking care of what when in the garden. You can assign specific people certain days, or divide the work of pruning, weeding, watering, and fertilizing so everyone has a specific job. Do what works best for you and make sure everyone is clear on the plan.



For more science-based gardening tips; check out our website, and the Empress of Dirt Podcast!

