

Garden Tips and FAQs

Even gardeners with the greenest thumbs have questions from time to time. Here are some common topics and tips to help you grow a beautiful, healthy garden.



Tool Care

Gardening tools can carry fungal and bacterial infections from one plant to the next. Clean tools with a mild disinfectant after each use. Wipe tools with linseed oil and sharpen as needed. Keep tools free from rust by storing them in a dry place.



Fertilizing

Plants absorb the nutrients they need to grow from the soil; fertilizer replaces those nutrients. Compost and granular organic fertilizers feed your soil as well as your plants. Annuals should be fertilized every 2 weeks, while perennials only need it once a month. And trees should only be fertilized once a year. Fertilize your soil again at the end of the growing season to replace lost nutrients and organic matter.



Pruning

Correctly pruning your plants encourages healthy growth. When to prune varies depending on the plant, but a general rule of thumb is to prune summer and fall flowering trees and shrubs in the dormant season (late winter/early spring) and to prune spring flowering trees and shrubs soon after their flowers fade. Make clean, smooth cuts at a 45-60 degree angle.



Watering

The best and most efficient time to water plants is in the early morning, while it is still cool.

Water less often, but thoroughly. Once or twice a week may be sufficient as long as you give your plants a long, healthy drink. Allow plants to dry slightly between waterings to promote root growth.

Clay soil absorbs water slowly and drains slowly as well, retaining water longer than other soils. Work compost into your soil to help it retain water.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the difference between an annual and a perennial?

A: Annual plants tend to bloom longer, but they only live for one growing season and then die. Perennials, on the other hand, regrow every spring. It is good to have a combination of both types in your garden.

Q: How do I know if sun-loving or shade-tolerant plants are best for my garden?

A: A garden that is "full sun" should receive 6 or more hours of direct sunlight daily. A partial sun area would receive about 4 hours per day. Partial shade areas receive 1 to 3 hours of sunlight daily and full shade areas never receive any direct sunlight.