

Fall 2007



From the Ground Up ↑

10 Tips for New Gardeners



"Autumn is a second
spring when every leaf
is a flower."

-Albert Camus



1. Determine the hours of sunlight your garden will receive to choose your plants.
2. Plan your garden according to each plant's specific needs. Try to lay out your garden with rows facing east; this will keep your taller plants from shading out the shorter ones.
3. Know your soil, whether it be sandy, loam or clay. Check the PH balance of your soil. Although plants can grow in unbalanced soil, you may not achieve optimum results.
4. Prepare your garden in the fall for the following year by rototilling.
5. Start plants indoors during late winter.
6. When buying plants from a nursery look for plants that are green and fresh looking, have buds and ones that are not tall and spindly. At this time, smaller is better. Avoid plants showing any signs of disease.
7. Give yourself enough time before planting season to harden off your plants. To do this, move them outside to a sheltered area for an hour or two each day. Increase outdoor time as they start to show signs of adjustment. Hardening off can be done in about two weeks and your plants will make a better transition from their pots to your garden.
8. Know when and how to fertilize each plant.
9. Stagger plantings of your fast growing vegetables. Vegetables such as radishes and lettuce can be planted every two weeks so that you always have a fresh supply.
10. At the end of the growing season get rid of debris and start a compost pile. Dead plants in your garden will attract bacteria, mold and insects and can cause damage to late season plants. Compost makes a great fertilizer for upcoming years.

Spotlight On

Our “Spotlight On” page provides information on a different tree, shrub and perennial in each addition of “From the Ground Up”



STELLA DE ORO DAYLILY
Heemerocallis ‘Stella de Oro’

This daylily is a popular clump forming perennial with long ribbon like leaves, and golden yellow flowers that bloom on long stems above the foliage all summer. It is drought tolerant and rarely troubled by pests. Great in mixed borders this plant prefers full sun. It grows 12 inches tall and spreads 18 inches wide.

GOLDEN CURRANT
Ribes aureum

This is an upright rounded shrub. The green deeply lobed foliage turns red-gold in the autumn. Fragrant and showy golden yellow flowers appear in May followed by dark purple berries. This shrub prefers full sun and is hardy to zone 2. It grows to a height of 6 feet and width of 5 feet



WEeping LARCH
Larix decidua ‘Pendula’

This is an unusual deciduous tree because it is cone bearing. Its fine, soft light green needles suspend from gracefully weeping branches. Foliage turns bright yellow and then sheds in autumn. This tree is a heavy cone producer. It must be staked to grow upright but makes a unique specimen tree. It grows in full sun to a height of 20 feet and a width of 13 feet.





Wintering Your Evergreens

In late fall water your evergreens thoroughly mid-October. After a few killing frosts is when you should winterize. Spray evergreens with an anti-desiccant such as Wilt Pruf to reduce moisture loss from the leaves during the winter. Wilt Pruf acts like a layer of wax, it also keeps moisture in the leaves if the sunlight heats up the leaves. Anti-desiccants will deteriorate in sunlight and will need to be reapplied early spring. Make sure to coat the top and bottom of tender shrubs. Wilt Pruf will also protect your evergreens from salt damage if you apply a new coat monthly. Another winterizing option is to cover them in burlap. Although not attractive, it will do the trick. Just make sure to tie down the burlap securely so it doesn't blow away on a windy day. Never use plastic to winterize your shrubs as it will smother the plant, create high humidity and icing conditions which will kill anything under the plastic!

Q: What do you get if you divide the circumference of a pumpkin by its diameter?

A: Pumpkin Pie



How to Pot and Care for Your Amaryllis

Amaryllis bulbs are usually available in the fall. When purchasing the bulbs, choose ones that are firm, and ones with only scars or signs of old foliage not new leaves. To pot use a light, well-drained potting mixture with peat moss. Use a pot with good drainage and one that is about 4 inches wider than the bulb. Leave about a 1/3 of the bulb above the soil level.

Place your newly planted amaryllis in a sunny and warm area. Keep day temperature between 18 and 25C, night temperatures can be as much as 10 degrees cooler. Water minimally until the first shoots appear. With the new growth make sure the soil is always moist but not overly wet. If your variety has large blooms you may need to stake the amaryllis. Fertilize once a month using a 20-20-20 fertilizer, it's better to underfertilize than overfertilize.

When the flower buds are ready to open you can move your pot to a cooler location with less light. As the flowers start to fade, remove the blooms, this prevents seed formation which will divert food from the bulb.

After the blooming period you can place the pot back into a sunny location, water and feed regularly. If properly cared for your amaryllis bulbs should grow about 1-2 cm each year. During the summer the amaryllis bulb can be placed outside in a semi-shaded location as long as they aren't outside for the spring and fall frosts. In the fall when the leaves have died, it is time to bring it inside. Place in a dry location out of light, and stop watering and feeding to prevent rot. In about 2 months you'll see new growth appear, replace the top inch of soil with new soil and place in a warm, sunny location. Water and fertilize as before.



Preparing to Bring Plants Indoors

One of the biggest problems plants face when being brought indoors is a lack of humidity. To avoid this follow these simple steps:

- ☼ Start early by creating a collection of large leak-proof trays and small reasonably attractive rocks.
- ☼ Place the plants in a sunny room in the trays on top of the rocks, and keep away from the heating vents.
- ☼ Put water in the tray so that the rocks keep the plant just out of the water, keep water at that level all winter long. Allow the plant to almost dry out between waterings and mist the leaves frequently.
- ☼ Keeping the plant above the water in the tray allows a constant level of humidity to surround the plant, without drowning the plant itself.



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