

Healthy Grosse Pointe and Harper Woods'

Tips and Tricks to Create a Garden in Your  
Michigan Backyard

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Gardening Calendar .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Planting Chart for Popular Fruits, Vegetables, and Herbs .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Planning Your Garden .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Supplies .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Best Garden Soil .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Planting, Caring, &amp; Harvesting .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Taking Care Of Your Garden .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Thank You! .....</b>	<b>23</b>

## Introduction

Living a healthier life can start in your own backyard garden. Healthy Grosse Pointe and Harper Woods can help you achieve that! Our goal is to create the Grosse Pointe and Harper Woods communities safe, healthy, and free of substance abuse. Starting and maintaining a garden can not only bring more fruits, vegetables, and herbs to your kitchen table, but it can also promote healthy living, a stronger appreciation for nature, a stress relief aid, and more.

Our beginners guide is perfect to start you off on a new and healthier lifestyle, introducing you into a new world of backyard gardening. Learn about the perfect time to plant and harvest your crops and what you need to have the best harvest you can!

## Gardening Calendar

It is important to know when to start planting your garden. Working around Michigan weather can be tricky and we hope that with our tips, starting your garden at the right time will be less stressful.

Different areas in Michigan have different frost dates. In the Detroit Metro Area, we are considered to be Zone 6.

Using past frost dates from Wayne County, The Old Farmer's Almanac has determined this timeline:

**Last Frost Date:** Around May 2nd

**First Frost Date:** Around October 11th

There are some plants that will be heartier if you start their seedlings off indoors prior to putting them outside. Planting seeds indoors in starter pots gives your crops a head start on the growing season. This is especially important if the plant has a shorter growing season. It also ensures that the outside weather conditions or animals will not get access to it. Not all plants need to be started indoors, only ones that are susceptible to colder temperatures and have a longer growing season. They include: tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, broccoli, brussel sprouts, and cauliflower.

Seeds should be started about 6-8 weeks before your last spring frost date, around March 7- March 21. This will allow the plants plenty of time to grow large and healthy enough to survive their transplant to your outdoor garden.

When the seeds grow too large for their starter pots, it is time to transplant outdoors, as long as it is warm enough.

## Planting Chart For Popular Fruits, Vegetables, and Herbs:

CROP	START SEEDS INDOORS BY	PLANT SEEDLINGS OUTDOORS BY	START SEEDS OUTDOORS BY	ESTIMATED HARVEST TIME
ARUGULA	N/A	N/A	Spring: Apr 18 - May 2 Fall: Sept 6	4 - 7 weeks
BASIL	Spring: Mar 6 - 21	Spring: May 9 - 23	N/A	3 - 4 weeks
BEET	N/A	N/A	Spring: Apr 18 - May 9 Fall: Aug 27	7 - 8 weeks
BELL PEPPER	Spring: Feb 20 - Mar 6 Fall: Apr 28	Spring: May 9 - May 23 Fall: Jun 23	N/A	60 - 90 days
BROCCOLI	Spring: Mar 6 - Mar 21 Fall: Jun 30	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 25 Fall: Jul 28	N/A	80 - 100 days
CABBAGE	Spring: Mar 6 - Mar 21 Fall: Jun 20	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 18 Fall: Jul 18	N/A	80 - 180 days
CANTELOPE	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 11	Spring: May 16 - May 30	Fall: Jul 13	Around 80 days
CARROT	N/A	N/A	Spring: Mar 28 - Apr 11 Fall: Aug 22	70 - 80 days
CAULIFLOWER	Spring: Mar 6 - Mar 21 Fall: Jun 30	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 25 Fall: Jul 28	N/A	50 - 100 days
CELERY	Spring: Feb 20 - Mar 6 Fall: Apr 19	Spring: May 9 - May 23 Fall: Jun 28	N/A	16 weeks
CHIVES	N/A	N/A	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 11	12 weeks
CILANTRO	N/A	N/A	Spring: May 2 - May 16	45 - 70 days

<b>COLLARD GREENS</b>	Spring: Feb 1 - Feb 15 Fall: Jul 1 - Jul 15	Spring: Mar 7 - Mar 15 Fall: Aug 15 - Sep 1	Spring: Mar 15 - Apr 1	60 - 75 days
<b>CORN</b>	N/A	N/A	Spring: May 2 - May 16 Fall: Jul 3	90 - 120 days
<b>CUCUMBER</b>	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 11	Spring: May 16 - May 30	Fall: Jul 8	50 - 70 days
<b>DILL</b>	N/A	N/A	Spring: Mar 28 - Apr 11	About 90 days
<b>EGGPLANT</b>	Spring: Feb 20 - Mar 6 Fall: Apr 28	Spring: May 16 - May 30 Fall: Jun 23	N/A	100 - 120 days
<b>GREEN BEAN</b>	N/A	N/A	Spring: May 9 - May 30 Fall: Jul 8	50 - 55 days
<b>KALE</b>	Spring: Mar 6 - Mar 21 Fall: Jul 20	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 25 Fall: Aug 17	N/A	55 - 75 days
<b>KOHLRABI</b>	Spring: Mar 21 - Apr 4	Spring: Apr 11 - Apr 18	Fall: Aug 22	50 - 70 days
<b>LETTUCE</b>	Spring: Mar 21 - Apr 4	Spring: Apr 18 - May 16	Fall: Sep 1	6 - 8 weeks
<b>MINT</b>	Spring: Mar 1 - Mar 15	Spring: On/After Apr 30	Spring: On/After Apr 15	90 days
<b>OKRA</b>	N/A	N/A	Spring: May 16 - May 30 Fall: Jul 3	50 - 65 days
<b>ONION</b>	N/A	N/A	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 25	90 - 175 days
<b>OREGANO</b>	Spring: Feb 20 - Mar 21	Spring: May 2 - May 23	N/A	45 days
<b>PARSLEY</b>	N/A	N/A	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 18	70 - 90 days
<b>PARSNIP</b>	N/A	N/A	Spring: Apr 11 - May 2	120 - 180 days

			Fall: Jul 8	
<b>PEA</b>	N/A	N/A	Spring: Mar 21 - Apr 11 Fall: Aug 7	60 - 70 days
<b>PEPPER</b>	Spring: Feb 20 - Mar 6	Spring: May 9 - May 23	N/A	60 - 90 days
<b>POTATO, IRISH</b>	N/A	N/A	Spring: Apr 25 - May 16	90 - 120 days
<b>POTATO, SWEET</b>	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 11	Spring: May 16 - May 30	N/A	90 - 170 days
<b>PUMPKIN</b>	Spring: Apr 11 - Apr 25	Spring: May 16 - May 30	Fall: May 30	90 -120 days
<b>RADISH</b>	N/A	N/A	Spring: Mar 6 - Mar 28 Fall: Sep 6	3 - 5 weeks
<b>ROSEMARY</b>	Spring: Feb 20 - Mar 6	Spring: May 9 - May 30	N/A	6 - 12 months
<b>SPINACH</b>	N/A	N/A	Spring: Mar 21 - Apr 11 Fall: Sep 16	37 - 45 days
<b>SWISS CHARD</b>	Spring: Mar 21 - Apr 4	Spring: Apr 11 - Apr 18	Fall: Sep 1	60 - 65 days
<b>THYME</b>	Spring: Feb 20 - Mar 21	Spring: May 2 - May 23	N/A	Plant is 6 - 8 inches tall
<b>TOMATO</b>	Spring: Mar 6 - Mar 21 Fall: May 3	Spring: May 9 - May 30 Fall: Jun 28	N/A	40 - 50 days
<b>TURNIP</b>	N/A	N/A	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 25 Fall: Sep 1	40 -55 days
<b>WATERMELON</b>	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 11	Spring: May 16 - May 30	Fall: Jun 13	70 - 75 days
<b>ZUCCHINI</b>	Spring: Apr 4 - Apr 18	Spring: May 16 - May 30	Fall: Jul 13	45 -55 days

The Old Farmer's Almanac also provides us with a tool on how to use

this planting calendar. This planting calendar is customized to the Grosse

Pointe and Harper Woods area. If you move to a different location, these dates may vary.

The **frost dates** indicate the best planting dates based on the average frost dates for the area. Using average frost dates are a good way to know approximately when to start gardening, but always check a local forecast before planting outdoors!

The **plant seedlings or transplant** dates indicate the best dates to plant young plants outdoors, both plants grown from seeds indoors and small starter plants you buy from your local nursery.

When **N/A (No Dates)** appear on the chart, that starting method is usually not recommended for that plant.

## Planning Your Garden

Choosing a location to put your garden will depend on what you are growing and their needs. It can be the difference between a plentiful harvest or struggling plants! It is important to think of your plants health and the natural benefits choosing a location can have. While planning your garden, think about these main things.



*Example of how a sweet autumn clematis is not letting a chain-link fence stop it from growing in the yard of Cindy Hall.*

## Sunlight Exposure

One of the most important factors in considering where to put your garden is the amount of sunlight exposure that your new garden will need. Depending on what you plan on planting, the amount of sunlight exposure can vary.

To thrive and do their best, most vegetables need full sun, which is at least 6 hours of unobstructed sunlight per day. In most cases, 8 hours of direct sunlight is ideal. This means that the sunlight should not be blocked by trees casting their shadows. Some crops, like broccoli, lettuce, spinach, and other greens, have the ability to thrive in less sunny spots, usually described as partial sun or partial shade. The more sunlight

your garden receives, the better off your garden will be.

Not exactly sure what kind of sun your garden will get and what to grow? There are four different types of sunlight exposure you can have in your garden.

**North-Facing:** Heavy Shade; Evening Sun (May-October)

Flowers/Plants: Woodland plants, ferns, and hydrangeas.

Fruits: Cherries, gooseberries, rhubarb, blackberries, blackcurrants, raspberries, pears, plums, alpine strawberries, redcurrants, and whitecurrants.

Vegetables: Swiss chard, brassicas, beetroot, salad leaves, kohlrabi, radishes, carrots, leeks, kale, and broad beans.



*Red Russian kale, a north-facing plant, growing in the garden of Cindy Slajus.*

**South-Facing:** Little Shade; Heavy Sun  
Mediterranean plants do best with heavy sun.

Flowers/Plants: Lilies (tip: cats are deathly allergic to lilies), irises, sunflowers, and chamomile.

Fruits: Majority of fruits - Cucumbers, squash, tomatoes, and peppers.

Vegetables: Majority of vegetables - Sweet potatoes, green beans, spinach, and jalapeno peppers.

**East-Facing:** Morning Shade; Afternoon/Evening Sun

Plants that need partial shade will thrive in east-facing locations.

Flowers/Plants: Honeysuckles, berberis, and Jacob's ladder.

Fruits: Majority of berries (blackberry, blueberry, and raspberries).

Vegetables: Garlic, green onions, and other leafy greens.

**West-Facing:** Partial Shade; Mostly Morning Sun

Flowers/Plants: Roses, daffodils, magnolias, and elderflowers.

Fruits: Apples, Apricots, blueberries, and many other north-facing fruits.

Vegetables: Radishes, onions, and the majority of potatoes.



*Erin Wojtowicz shows off her sunny spot behind her garage where she gets great sun!*

### **Water Accessibility**

Ensure that water is nearby and is always available to your gardening site. A combination of dry soil and high heat can be deadly to your garden bed. Extra water is necessary, especially if there is a dry spell during the hot summer months and your plans rely on you for hydration. The soil near walls, fences, and under overhanging trees is most commonly going to be too dry for good plant growth.

Plants do best when they are watered around **three** times a week, factoring in the rain. The general rule is that plants need about one inch of water per week. Water at the soil level, **NOT** above.

Unsure if you are watering too much or not enough? Touch your soil! Soil that sticks to your hand and you can form it into a ball is moist enough. If it barely holds together in your hand, or if just by looking at the soil, it is hard and cracked, it is probably too dry and you will need to water. If the soil is dry an inch from the surface, it is time to water!

A beginners watering guide is included in *Planting, Caring, and Harvesting*.

### **Protection from Wind**

Shelter from heavy winds is ideal for all crops and gardens. Crops that grow upright and produce an abundant amount of fruits or flowers should be protected the most. These crops might be: tomatoes, peas, beans, peppers, and other climbing fruits and vegetables.

Strong winds can also dry out the crops soil, which can be harmful especially if the soil tends to get dry due to direct sunlight exposure throughout the day. Dry cold strong winds quickly suck out the moisture from both the plant and its soil. The best option for preventing strong winds from harming your garden is to put up open or woven fences and/or hedges near the garden.

### **Good Soil**

An ideal garden has rich and loamy soil to work with. Not sure if you have good soil or not in your yard? If your lawn is lush and healthy, then you probably have decent soil.

“Loamy” soil is composed of almost equal parts sand and silt with a

little less clay. A decent ration is 40 percent of each sand and silt and then 20 percent of clay. If the soil has too much clay or too much sand, you will need to fix this by adding more organic matter. Clay soil will stay wet for too long and will suffocate plants. Sandy soil will quickly dry out, leaving your plants parched for water.

A beginners guide to good soil is included in *Garden Soil*.

### **Level Ground or Gentle Slope**

Whether you build a garden plot or you are using what is already in your backyard, try to make the ground as level as possible or with a gentle slope. Keep your garden plot away from any low spots in your yard that pools water. Not only can it overwater your plants, a low spot can also form a frost pocket. Most backyards are already level or have at most a gentle slope so this step in creating your garden should not be hard.



*Example of raised garden beds from the garden of Jeff Swantek and Ed Maul.*

### **Microclimate Factors**

Did you know that you have your own microclimate in your backyard?

Due to areas with differing weather conditions, structures, trees, shrubs, and other factors can alter the climate around your garden.

Nearby structures like houses, fences, sheds, and garages can cast shade and lower temperatures in your yard at various times of the day. Frost pockets may occur on the wind-facing side of the structure. In these areas, the ground will hold moisture longer. Although structures may help shelter plants from strong winds, it can also create wind tunnels where the wind is redirected, such as at the end of a fence.

### **Effort**

Most importantly, when considering how to build your garden and what to grow, is how much time and effort you are willing to put into this new project. Not only does it take awhile to plan and prepare the area and the plot for gardening, but it takes a lot of effort to keep the garden going. Choosing a small area and hearty plants to start off is the best option. Each year, if you feel comfortable, add another fruit, vegetable, or flower to your garden. Soon, you will be using your own fruits, vegetables, and herbs in your healthy cooking!



*Kale you believe Cindy Slajus' Red Russian kale harvest? A beautiful north-facing plant!*

## Supplies

It is not essential for a beginner gardener to have every single fancy and expensive garden tool and gadget that money can buy. The only thing that matters is that the tools and equipment that you are using is the right kind for your needs. Having just the essential ones around will help you care and tend to your garden easier. Most of these should already be in your garage or shed but here is a complete list of everything you might need and much more.

## Gloves

One of the most important things to have in gardening are gloves! Gloves protect your hands and wrists from

thorns, dirt, and more. While you might not handle harmful items often, even harmless looking plants could leave your hands irritated and sore if they're unprotected. Gloves also protect your hands from developing blisters and sores. A pair of sturdy gloves, even ones with rubber tips on the fingers, is the best supply you can have!

## Shovel/Spade

A shovel and a spade can both be used for the same reason. A spade offers nice, straight, clean edges and is perfect for transplanting plants around your garden and slicing through tough root systems. A shovel can do the same thing but can also be used to scoop soil and dig holes. Whichever you choose, will work for your garden.



*A spade being used in a garden.*

## Weeder

All gardens will develop weeds! Choose a weeder tool instead of harsh chemicals to get rid of the weeds. A weeder is a small hand tool with a forked end that is used to dig out weeds to remove them by their roots.

### **Garden Hoe**

Having a hoe in your collection of tools will allow you to move soil around in your garden, remove unwanted roots, dig trenches, and weed your garden. It will be able to cut through tough soil and other obstacles with ease.

### **Soil Knife**

A soil knife will allow you to plant herbs, vegetables, flowers, and bulbs; dig out weeds, divide plants, cut through roots, remove rocks, open bags, cut twins and ties, and so much more! They usually have a serrated blade that is sharp on both ends.

### **Pruning Shears**

Pruning Shears, or hand pruners, are a gardening must have if you plan to plant roses, vegetables, shrubs, and fruit trees. It is designed to cut live wood with a clean cut.

### **Garden Scissors**

You might think you will not need garden scissors but if you have plants that have a more delicate pruning job, these are perfect for the task.

### **Watering Hose**

Other than water itself, a watering hose is essential to have in your tool collection. You cannot rely on rainfall and a watering wand or hose nozzle can be attached onto the hose so that you can customize the water spray pattern and distance depending on what you and your plants require.

### **Watering Can**

If you do not want to use a watering hose or the hose is too difficult to use, a watering can is a perfect alternative. A watering can is especially good to use for flower beds or a seedling nursery.

### **Spading Fork**

A spading fork, or gardening fork, is perfect if you need to aerate the soil or transplant your seedlings. It is also good for splitting perennials and ornamental grasses.

### **Hand Fork**

The hand fork is small but essential. It is used to break up the hard, lumpy garden soil into crumbly compost in order to achieve a texture in which young plants can grow their roots without being impeded.

### **Rake**

Most likely, you will already have a rake in your garden as it is a great tool for your yard and garden. It can be used to clean up trimmings, grass clippings, fallen leaves and even be used to break up soil and level out beds.

### **Hedge and Lawn Shears**

Hedge and lawn shears are perfect if you plan on having hedges and bushes in your garden. Using this tool, you can easily trim and shape your bushes to a shape that fits your landscape the best.

### **Pruning Saw**

If your yard has trees with stubborn branches, a pruning saw is a good tool to have if the branches are too big for a pruning shear.

### **Wheelbarrow**

Gardening and maintaining your yard will produce a lot of waste like dirt, leaves, and weeds. Using a wheelbarrow can be helpful and help reduce the number of trips to and from your compost heap or yard waste area.

### **Garden Glide**

Using a garden glide can help you complete your gardening work with fewer trips. Use it to drag items that are too heavy across your yard like seedlings, mulch, soil, compost and more. This is a perfect tool if you do not or cannot lift things up.



*An example of a garden glide being used.*

### **Lawn Mower**

Most likely, you will already have a lawn mower in your possession. Whether it is a manual, electric, or gas mower, all are essential to have in order to make sure you have a clean and trimmed lawn.

### **Hand Trowel**

A common tool amongst gardeners, a hand trowel will allow you to plant seedlings, dig out small chunks of soil, or dig up tough weeds.

### **Edger**

Going along the edges of your garden with an edger will allow you to create crisp lines to make your garden look sharp and neat.

### **Leaf Blower**

If you have a lot of trees near your house, having a leaf blower will allow you to get rid of the leaves on your lawn and garden quickly.

### **Lopper**

Loppers are a type of scissor perfect for pruning twigs and small branches. They are similar to pruning shears but with longer handles. These are perfect if you need a longer reach.

### **Best Garden Soil**

Did you know that Michigan has many different types of soil? Different soil types are made up of different materials and function differently. In Wayne County, we have Metamora Sandy Loam.

This type of soil is:

- Poorly drained and runoff of water is slow (so don't overwater!)
- Natural fertility is medium to high
- Good for cover crops, shrubs, and trees

If you are noticing that the soil in your garden tends to stay moist or dry for longer, think about planting specific plants that do well in this soil. It is best to play to the strengths of your garden, by choosing plants that thrive in the conditions that it offers. This even means that you might have to plant different plants in different parts of your garden.

### **Moist Soil**

If your garden is experiencing more rainfall than normal or does not have great drainage, there are many things you can do to ensure your plants are not swimming or drowning in the excess water. Moist soil usually does not mean disaster for your plants - many plants thrive in moist soil. But if you notice your plants are not doing as well, here are some things you can do to counteract the water.

### **Add Coarse Grit**

Adding coarse grit can help improve drainage, especially in the winter. Add grit to the bottom of the planting hole when adding new plants.

### **Grow Moisture-Loving Plants**

Many plants like hydrangeas,

wisteria, bamboo, and hostas thrive in moist conditions.

### **Build Raised Beds**

Separate your plants from the moist soil by creating a raised bed that you can fill with the perfect soil mix for your plants.

### **Protect Plants From Slugs and Snails**

Slugs and snails love to live in moist soil. With them comes the havoc they will bring to plants. Remember, only control slugs and snails organically!

### **Add Organic Matter**

If you have it available to you, add manure or your personal compost to your wet soil to improve its drainage. Not only is it something you can do with your personal compost, it will also help create air pockets needed to boost damage.

### **Fork Over The Soil**

Heavy rain will compact the soil down, allowing water to collect easier on the surface. Fork over the soil lightly to help drain the water further into the soil.

### **Avoid Treading on the Soil**

Avoid walking on the soil after it rains. It will compact the soil, so fork it over!

Here are 25 plants you can add to your moist garden:

- *Angelica*
- Autumn Asters
- Bleeding Heart
- Bistort
- Candelabra Primula
- *Carex*
- Cowslip
- *Deschampsia*
- Dogwood
- False Goatsbeard
- *Hakonechloa*
- Hart's Tongue Fern
- Himalayan Honeysuckle
- *Hostas*
- *Hydrangeas*
- Masterwort
- *Monarda*
- *Rodgersia*
- *Rudbeckia*
- *Salix* (willow)
- *Sanguisorba*
- Siberian Flag Iris
- Solomon's Seal
- *Trillium*
- *Zantedeschia*



Andrea Santiago has a moist garden so she planted Pacific Bleeding Hearts to compliment her soil type.

### Dry Soil

Dry soil is easy to spot. This soil

is easier to work with and move around, but it dries out fast. Are you noticing your plants are wilting quickly in hot weather and/or has yellowing foliage? These are key signs that your plants are deprived of nutrients. But there are many things you can do to moisten up your soil.

### Add Organic Matter

Both dry and moist soil need organic matter. By using well-rotted manure or your compost, it can help improve the soil structure and help retain moisture.

### Add Mulch

Mulch the soil when it's damp in order to train the moisture - add compost, bark, or gravel

### Grow Drought-Tolerant Plants

Embrace your dry soil by planting drought-tolerant plants, Mediterranean plants, or ornamental grasses, that all enjoy good drainage.

Here are 25 plants that you can plant in your dry soil:

- *Agapanthus* 'Silver Baby'
- *Anchusa Azurea*
- *Artemisias*
- Bearded Irises
- Cardoon (*Cynara*)
- Chinese Silver Grass
- *Cotyledon Orbiculata*
- *Euphorbia Characias* subsp. *Wulfenii*
- Fountain Grass
- Foxtail Lilies (*Eremurus*)

- Geums
- Hardy Geraniums
- *Knautia Macedonica*
- Lavender
- *Melianthus Major*
- Nepeta
- *Panicum Virgatum*
- Passion Flowers
- Pittosporum
- Sea Hollies
- Sedums
- *Stachys Byzantina*
- *Stipa Tenuissima*
- Teasels (*Dipsacus*)
- *Trachelospermum Jasminoides*

## Planting, Caring, and Harvesting

We know that gardening can be very overwhelming, so make sure that when you are starting out that you have people to help you and you do not start off too large. Although we would love to see you provide the majority of the fruits and vegetables that you need to your family from your garden, it is difficult to obtain in the smaller-sized yards that we have in this area. Remember, don't bite more off than you can chew!

It is important for you to work on your garden as often as you can. Not only can it provide you with beneficial outside time (sunshine and fresh air), it can be a bonding experience with your family, and provide you something to take care of year-round.

Here are some general tips to keep you keeping your garden healthy

and fruitful during your planting, caring, and harvesting seasons:



*A hearty harvest from the garden of Christine White Dodge.*

### Mulch It Up

Keep your soil cool by adding mulch around your plants. Not only does mulch look nice, mulch also keeps the weeds down, retains water, and will compost and add to the quality of your soil. We suggest putting about 2-inches of mulch into your garden beds each year after planting.

### Keep It In Your Zone

Although it would be fun to have all different types of exotic plants and herbs in your garden, Make sure you plant within the zone we are in. Follow the guidelines we have given you, plant on time, and plant what you can grow based on the weather trends around you.

### It Is All About The Location

Your garden should be put in the best location possible in your garden. As stated previously, your garden should be on level ground and should have at least 6 or more hours of sunlight a day.

### **Your Plants Are Thirsty**

Water is necessary for your plants to flourish, you will need to water your garden regularly. Each plant has different water requirements, but on average you should be okay with watering your garden an inch per week.

### **But Not Too Much Water**

Start by watering the root of the plant, never start from the top of the plant. Try to avoid getting water on any flowers, blooms, or foliage. Avoid overwatering as well!

Overwatering can lead to fungi growth, leaf spots, and unhealthy plants. Only water as often as necessary for your specific plant species, and let the soil dry between waterings to keep from oversaturating. The trick is to keep your garden well-watered, but not soaking to avoid wetting the foliage. Water directly onto the soil.

### **Your Plants Are Hungry**

Not only do your plants need water, they also need fertilizer. Try to choose natural local fertilizer. Some plants need fertilizer more frequently than others so make sure you do your research before applying anything.

### **Send Weeds On Their Way**

Weeds are not your friend! Weeds will fight for nutrients and space in your garden, and most likely will win. Be sure to pull out weeds at least once a week.

### **Bring Out Your Dead**

It can be natural for your plants to have a few dead blooms on it. Remove them as often as necessary. Your plants will look nicer and it will give them more room to produce new blooms!

### **Check-Up On Your Plants**

Give your plants a check up to see if you have attracted any pests or diseases. Make it a priority to check your plants at least once a week.

### **Rotate Your Crops**

Your soil needs a break from growing specific crops. Giving your soil a break also prevents diseases from breeding. Rotate what types of crops you grow in your garden. If you don't rotate your plants, pests can remember where your crops are and treat your yard like an all-you-can-eat buffet.

### **Boost Your Soil**

Get in the habit of testing your soil to see what it needs and feed it. Your soil needs to be healthy in order for your plants to grow well. This process takes a few years, but pays off in the end.

### **Wash Your Tools**

One of the tips that is most looked over is cleaning your gardening tools. Garden tools are constantly in your soil and touching your plants, which possibly might touch diseases and viruses too. To prevent spreading viruses and diseases around,

### **Wash Your Garden, Too**

Ensure that your garden stays clear of any dead leaves, plants, and debris that might collect in your garden beds. Keeping your garden clean will also keep the pests away because they don't have a place to live and hide away.

### **Prune Properly**

Your plants will need to be pruned properly as well during the whole year. Keeping your plants pruned will allow for new growth to happen.

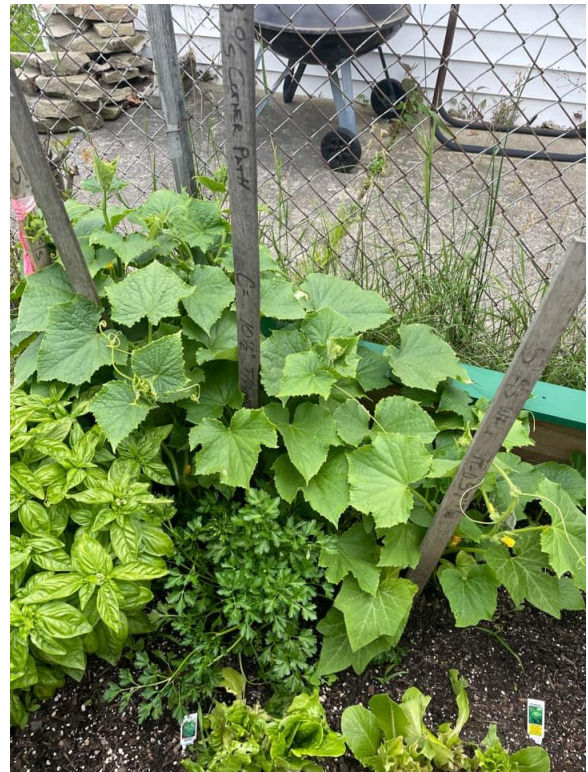


*Pruning shears can be used to prune your plants to promote new growth.*

### **Your Plants Need A Lift**

When your plants start growing and producing, they might become heavy. Plants, especially tomatoes, need to be staked into the ground and

use twine to tie them up and stay off of the ground and become rotten.



*With a little help from these stakes, Christine White Dodge is making sure her plants are getting the support and lift they need.*

### **Grow Disease-Resistant Plants**

One of the main goals of gardening is to avoid disease. Choose disease-resistant plants and a variety of different plant varieties in your garden.

### **Give Your Plants Some Space**

Many of your plants that you will have in the garden like their personal space. Plants need their own room to grow and for air to circulate around them to fight off disease.

## Harvest Your Heart Out

Once your plant is producing, make sure that you are harvesting it when it is ready right away. Keeping it in your garden for longer than you are supposed to will allow it to rot and attract pests.



*In the garden of Erin Wojtowicz, you might be able to find her mini master gardeners harvesting their hearts out while learning about the importance of fresh fruits and vegetables.*

## Finish The Job Right

At the end of the year when your harvesting is done, make sure that you remove all dead plants and any debris. Cover the gardening area with compost, manure, and mulch. Not only will it protect your gardening beds but it will also help your soil revive.

## Taking Care of Your Garden

The work does not end when you plant your garden in your yard, it will continue when you are ensuring the plants are healthy during the growing and off season. If you are providing proper care to your garden, it will increase the quality and longevity of your plants, fruits, and vegetables. Different plants require different levels of care.

## Check the Health of Your Plants

Whether you are transplanting plants from nurseries or growing your own from seeds, fully inspect your garden plants to make sure they are pest and rot free. Bringing in infected or diseased plants can harm the whole garden. Aside from plant disease, destructive bugs like aphids, gnats, and whiteflies should be eliminated using the appropriate pesticides or other effective extermination methods.

## Treat Your Soil

Although we wish it did, soil does not stay healthy and fresh all the time. Soil naturally degrades overtime and needs to be refreshed. You can buy new soil from a local garden center. Always make sure that you check the quality of your garden soil and replace it when necessary. Adding mulch is also useful for retaining the soil moisture of your garden. Mulching material will keep weeds down and it will also supply organic matter to your soil when it begins to degrade. Fertilizing your

garden is another method to keep it healthy. Depending on the type of plant species you are growing, use the right amount of fertilizer and apply appropriately to make sure you do not overstress your plants.

### **Clean Your Gardening Tools**

One of the most neglected things in your garden are your gardening tools. Your garden tools should be cleaned to control disease and prevent transferring any bacteria or dangerous elements into your garden. In addition to the other methods of garden care, clean tools can help your garden stay healthy longer.

### **Perform Plant Maintenance**

Deadhead, prune, and cull your plants as needed. Deadheading removes old flower blooms to encourage new growth. Pruning is cutting back the branches of your plants to control growth and make room for more. Culling your plants will clean up the unhealthy bits and also create more space for your garden to flourish. These gardening methods can promote growth, clear out any possible hidden pests or undesirable parts, increasing room for your flower or vegetable garden to flourish.

### **Destroy the Weeds**

Weeds are ruthless garden killers. They can suffocate the roots of your healthy plants, harbor pests, and become an unsightly nuisance. Weeds take up space and resources that your

plants could be using, so weeding your garden can keep it healthy and growing.

### **Protect From Animals**

Set up a barrier around your garden bed, like a wire fence, to keep herbivores, critters, and other garden pets from destroying your plants. Wire fencing will allow your garden to stay safe, while also keeping it visible and exposed to the sun.



*A visitor seeking shelter in the garden of Jeff Swantek and Ed Maul.*

### **Stake Your Plants**

If your plants need a bit more structure to rely and grow up, fix sticks into the group and tie the flower stems or other garden crops to them with cloth or thread (like trellis). Staking your plants - like cucumber, pepper, or tomato plans - reinforces the stems and keeps them from bending, breaking, and encourages them to stay upright and healthy.



*Example of staking from the garden of Amanda Santiago.*

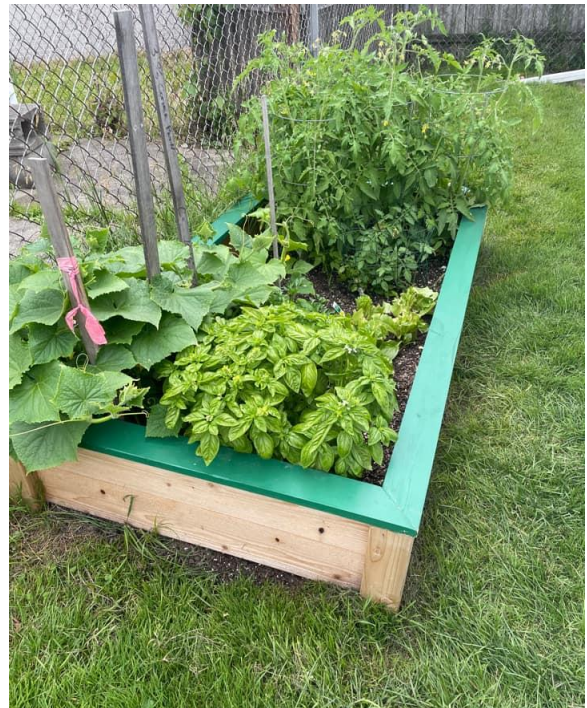
### **Companion Plant**

Another way to not only make your garden look great but to stimulate plant growth is to plant companion plants around your garden. A companion plant is when you plant a variety of different crops together to increase growth productivity, provide pollinators, ward off pests, and control the habitat for beneficial insects. Intercropping is a great way to keep your garden and flower beds thriving by surrounding them with the right plants that will enable their successful growth.

### **Try Raised Beds**

Adding raised garden beds to your garden plans can significantly increase your plant's overall health. Raised beds can be beneficial to your

garden. They can be utilized for starting with just a small garden or even if you want to plant a variety of sections. Raised beds will have a barrier on the outside, are able to provide a proper drainage system, and can help keep your garden bed safe from pathway weeds and other meanaces.



*A beautiful example of a raised garden bed in the yard of Christine White Dodge built by GP resident Sara Jane.*

### **Pollination**

Not only do bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds add color and fun to your garden, they can also help fertilize and make your plants strong and healthy. Plant flowers with lots of colors and a variety of bloom shapes. Keep light on any use of pesticides, rely on predator insects like ladybugs and wasps if you can.



*This butterfly is working hard at pollinating in the garden of Debbie Bigham.*

### **Pest Management**

Your garden will naturally attract destructive pests that will call your garden their new home. Most garden pests can be dealt with using non-toxic methods, like handpicking larger insects or blasting them off with a strong spray of water. We suggest a non-pesticide option or get an eco-friendly pesticide from your local gardening store.



*A backyard garden to plate salad in the home of Christine White Dodge.*

### **Thank You!**

However you start your garden, big or small, planned out or spontaneous, we hope you encourage the whole family to get involved. Encouraging your family members to take care of plants in your backyard as a team can stimulate some of the 8 dimensions of wellness that are important to have. By having something to take care of, to focus on, to learn about, and to create memories about, not only will your garden flourish but so will the relationships between you and your family members.

A special thank you to the Grosse Pointe and Harper Woods gardeners who provided pictures of their gardens, plants, and harvests.

If you have any further or detailed gardening questions, please contact your local nursery.

If you have any questions or would like any resources about topics such as: mental health, nutrition, LGBTQ+, substance abuse, parenting, and much more, please contact Healthy Grosse Pointe and Harper Woods. Go to [www.healthygphw.org](http://www.healthygphw.org) or call 313-647-2827.