

# ORGANIC GARDENS *TODAY*

SUMMER 2012

Volume 2, Issue 2





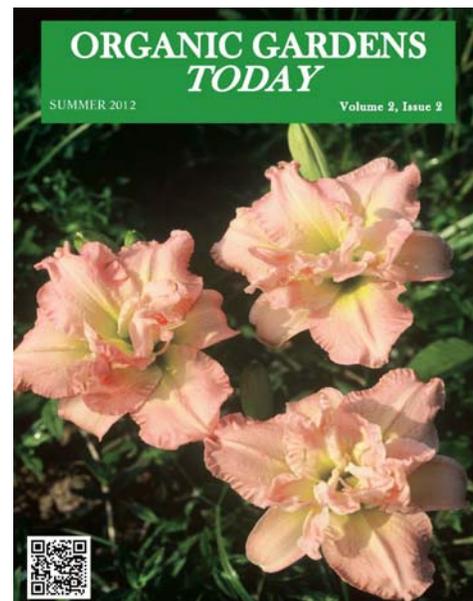
## Table of Contents

### *Welcome to our Summer Issue!*

- Index - Page 2
- Editor's Comments - Page 3
- Our Contributors -Page 4
- Home Grown Gardening Tips - Page 7
- Natural Pesticides - Page 10
- Farming with a Higher Purpose - Page 12
- Great Organic Expectations -Page 15
- Tomatoes ...Heirlooms, Hybrids ... - Page 16
- Herb Gardening - Page 18
- Feed. The. Soil. - Page 21
- Citrus in Containers, Organically? - Page 24
- Making The Most of H<sub>2</sub>O- Page 27
- Summer Book Review/Contest - Page 29
- Website - Local Harvest - Page 30
- Your Photos - Page 31

### Summer 2012

#### On The Cover



Daylilies are a very durable, consistent blooming perennial with many color variations that can be accommodated in any garden.

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## From The Editor

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Welcome to the Summer edition of *Organic Gardens Today!*

I have to say that this spring has been one of the strangest ones I can remember in my many years of gardening. It all started in the late winter with no snowfall and dry, warm weather. When spring arrived we continued with this weather pattern, making me wonder whether if no April showers came, would May flowers appear? The flowers arrived but their season of bloom was shortened. Then came April showers at the end of May continuing into the beginning of June. Several days of rain has made me feel like I am living in England or the Northwest more than the Northeast.



So where do we go from here? My spring prediction of more weeds, more insects, and more diseases has come true. This gardening season will be a difficult one for us to keep up with, so doing as much preventative work will only benefit our time-strapped lives. Spraying our plants with garlic or hot pepper-based sprays will help deter insects from nibbling. Spraying our shrubs and trees with Wilt-Pruf, a winter anti-desiccant, will help coat the leaves creating a non-stick surface so diseases won't adhere to the leaves. Controlling weeds can be more labor intensive, but once you have removed the majority, a coating of corn gluten will help prevent weeds from sprouting. Corn gluten is safer than Preen and is a low grade organic fertilizer, feeding your plants while preventing weeds. Finally be a good detective and keep a watchful eye on your plants. Catching disease and insect problems early before they become a major infestation will not only save you time but also money.

Are you a gardening 'expert' that would like to write for us and help share the organic principles the magazine conveys? Whether you have a gardening degree from a college or you are "dirt" educated, send me an e-mail with the subject and article you want to cover. I will review and see if we can use it in the next issue. Please remember that the magazine will be online on or about the first day of the new season, so please address your article for the upcoming season and make sure it is sent at least one month before the publication date for formatting.

If you like what we have accomplished with *Organic Gardens Today*, please share us with your family, friends, coworkers and fellow gardeners. We rely on word of mouth advertising to spread the word about the magazine, and I thank you in advance for supporting us. You can "like us" on Facebook and all of the social media web sites with one click on our web site's homepage. The more you spread the word, the more writers will want to be part of this new creation, meaning even more information for you, our reader.

With all of the work that needs to be accomplished in our gardens, please remember to take time to appreciate what you have created. In a short amount of time winter will be upon us again and we will be dreaming of days like this out in our gardens.

David Daehuke, Editor

## MEET OUR WRITERS



### DAVID DAEHNKE, THE GARDENING GURU, EDITOR

David is a seasoned gardener and lecturer, helping both the novice and experienced gardener. His fun and informative lectures are widely requested throughout the Northeast. Over the past 12 years, David has successfully managed three public gardens as Executive Director, but his true love is communicating proper gardening practices and creating gardens of beauty. Previously David was the landscape supervisor at the James A. McFaul Environmental Center where he was responsible for the management and operation of a ½-acre nursery, chief grant writer for horticultural projects, and educator of programs for public and private groups. David also developed and produced the park's first horticultural newsletter, *The Horticultural Harbinger*, and designed new gardens and created the largest public collection of ornamental grasses in New Jersey. David was also general manager of Ramapo Landscape Supply, a wholesale/retail/distributor of horticultural supplies, increasing sales 42% in his three year tenure. Previously David owned his own successful landscape design, maintenance and build firm for over 10 years. It was in this experience that he decided to communicate to people the joys of gardening and how they could accomplish the same results on their own, assisting the growing DIY segment of homeowners in New Jersey. He received his B.S. Degree in Ornamental Horticulture at Delaware Valley College. He was an advisory board member and adjunct professor for the Horticulture department at Bergen Community College in New Jersey. David is widely known from his radio show "The Gardening Guru" on WGHT 1500 AM, and can also be heard monthly on Martha Stewart's Sirius Radio program "Morning Living with Betsy Karetnick". He is a horticultural consultant on his Internet Web page, [www.thegardeningguru.com](http://www.thegardeningguru.com). Contact David through his web site for current lecture schedule and to make arrangements for your own presentation.



### GERI LAUFER

Horticulturist Geri Laufer is a dirt gardener and a widely published authority on gardening topics. Her award-winning book *Tussie-Mussies* (Workman Publishing) is the definitive work on the Language of Flowers. Geri's media appearances include *Good Morning America*, *NPR* and *Home Matters*. Former hats include Georgia Cooperative Extension Service County Agent, Gwinnett Tech Environmental Horticulture Adjunct Professor and Atlanta Botanical Garden Public Relations Manager/newsletter editor/web content manager. Currently [GardenGeri.com](http://GardenGeri.com) provides PR and social media strategies for horticulture companies and a regular monthly gardening commentary on Atlanta NPR affiliate WABE-FM. Visit <http://www.gardengeri.com>



### SUZANNE VANOVER

Suzanne VanOver has always had a passion for plants. By the age of three, she could identify every vegetable by its leaf in her uncle's garden where she spent a majority of her childhood. This ignited a curiosity that has followed her throughout her life and career. Her home gardens are filled with plants from both grandmothers and many family members and friends who have shared with her along the way. After becoming a massage therapist over ten years ago, her attraction to the plant kingdom lead her along nature's path to the use essential oils for health and wellness. She regularly hold Wellness Workshops, educating about a variety of ways to incorporate essential oils into our daily lives. Suzanne has always called New Jersey her home where she is raising her three teenage boys with her husband, Bill.

## MEET OUR WRITERS (continued)

### MAUREEN FARMER

Maureen is creator of The Farmer's Garden web site. This web site is a surplus garden produce exchange where you can buy, sell, trade, or give away your excess backyard produce.

<http://www.thefarmersgarden.com> She is also on the Board of Urban Oaks Organic Farm in New Britain, Connecticut.



### LAURA TAYLOR

Laura Taylor is passionate about organic vegetable growing at her home in the San Fernando Valley. She sowed her first vegetable patch over 17 years ago with a variety of summer vegetables. With each spring Laura found herself creating additional garden spaces to accommodate her growing obsession with home grown vegetables and tomatoes.

Laura now grows a riot of season vegetables along with over 90 varieties of tomatoes. She brings her passion for growing, cooking, teaching and bringing people together through her company, Laura Taylor at Home. She has become a hub for education, inspiration and encouragement for inspired living and enjoying home growing, culinary arts and entertaining. Classes are offered in topics related to growing vegetables, cooking and needlearts. In addition, Laura has created a line of tomato-themed stationery as well as authored and self-published Tomato Calendar and Growing Guide. The 2012 Tomato Calendar and Growing Guide will soon be available through Laura's website, [www.LauraTaylorAtHome.com](http://www.LauraTaylorAtHome.com)

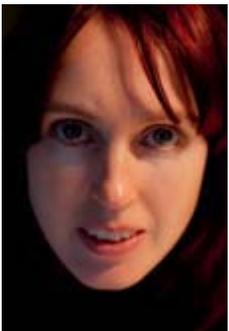


### DARREN SHERIFF

Darren is a South Carolina Nursery and Landscape Association Certified Professional Nurseryman, A Charleston County Master Gardener and works for Lowcountry Nursery. He is on the Charleston County Master Gardener Board of Directors and an active member of the Coastal Carolina Camellia Society. Known as "The Citrus Guy" in the MG and horticultural world, he currently has 51 different varieties of Citrus in his yard, all in containers. Darren is also an Exotic Tropical Fruit buff, growing things

many people have never heard of. After being born in New Jersey, living in and graduating from high school in Florida and spending four years in the Marine Corps, Darren finally realized his true passion was in horticulture and has been pursuing that since the early 1990's. He can be reached via E-mail at

[TheCitrusGuy@netzero.com](mailto:TheCitrusGuy@netzero.com) Darren also writes a garden blog which can be seen at <http://www.thecitrusguy.blogspot.com/>



### LORRAINE FOLEY

Lorraine Foley ([lorraine@wildlandscape.com](mailto:lorraine@wildlandscape.com)) is a gardener and garden writer with many years experience working with organic methods. She has a degree in horticulture and a Masters in *Rural Environmental Conservation and Management*. This award explores the conservation value of habitats and ecosystems. Lorraine specialises in designing and creating gardens that are wildlife friendly as well as being simply beautiful. Her passion for herbaceous borders is based on experience and a deep love of plants. Her garden is designed with an eclectic mix of ornamental species of trees as well as dense herbaceous borders that's attractive to pollinating insects. She grows fruit and vegetables for her family

using only natural methods. For more information on wild life friendly gardening, visit [www.wildlandscape.com](http://www.wildlandscape.com)

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# Plant a Row For The Hungry

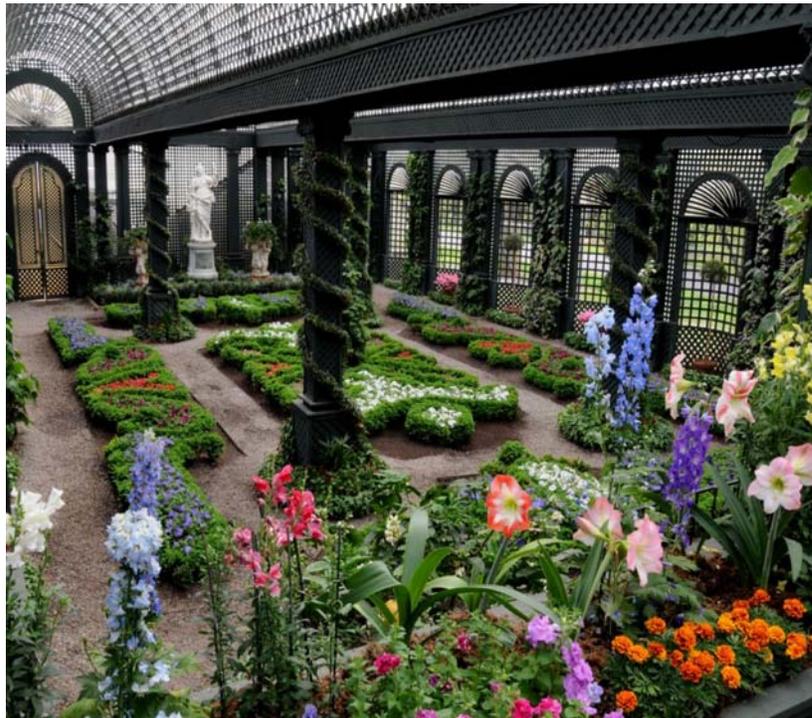


The logo consists of a stylized green figure with a red heart on its chest, holding a green rectangular object. The figure is positioned to the right of the text 'Plant a Row For The Hungry'.

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# HOME GROWN GARDENING TIPS

## GARDEN TIPS FOR JULY

- \* Bachelor buttons which have finished their first blooming period may often be made to flower again by shearing at least six inches from the tops of the plants.
- \* Dahlias require little artificial watering in a normal season but should be given water enough to soak the ground deeply once a week starting in late July.
- \* Keep the dead and dying foliage of hollyhocks cleared away from the base of the plants to help cut down on the transmission of diseases.
- \* Columbines in many varieties can be grown from seed, which should be sown an eighth of an inch deep and firmly pressed into the soil. The seed take three to four weeks to germinate and can be collected when the seed pods dry out.
- \* Most climbing roses are best pruned as soon as they have finished blooming. If they send up new shoots from the roots (not a grafted rose), you can prune most of the old canes out.
- \* Cuttings should be made of coleus, geraniums, ever-blooming begonias and any other plants that may be needed for the house next winter. Root them in moist sand. Geraniums will root easier if you let them dry in a shady, airy place for several hours before putting them in the sand.
- \* Oriental poppies have become dormant by late July and can be divided with excellent success. Even if the roots are divided into 2 inch pieces and planted in a good soil, most of the will develop into new plants within a short period of time.
- \* Bearded irises may be divided and new plants set out at any time during the next two months.
- \* Peony seed pods should be removed. It will be beneficial to mix into the soil a high-phosphorous fertilizer which will help in making good strong eyes for next year.
- \* Wisterias can be pruned now and will be benefited by a hard pruning instead of a lighter trimming.
- \* It is not too late to start annuals for fall blooming, including annual lupines, stock, godetias and Drummond's phlox.
- \* Watch grafted plants to see that no suckers grow up from beneath the grafted area. Such sucker should be removed at once by hand picking.
- \* Set your cutting height higher for your lawn during the hotter summer months. This will help shade the roots by keeping the ground cool, and give the plants more water storage area in the leaves.
- \* July is usually a dry month and watering is most likely necessary. Do not merely sprinkle the surface of the ground, but soak it thoroughly for the most benefit. A light sprinkle will only draw the roots closer to the surface.

Send an e-mail with your own gardening tips to:

[HGGT@ORGANICGARDENSTODAY.COM](mailto:HGGT@ORGANICGARDENSTODAY.COM)

We look forward to hearing from you!

## GARDEN TIPS FOR AUGUST

- \* To have forget-me-nots in bloom early next season, the seed should be sown this month. They make an attractive under planting for spring bulbs such as tulips.
- \* The Virginia bluebell, *Mertensia virginica*, can be divided at this time because the plant is in its dormant stage.
- \* The foliage of bleeding heart, *Dicentra spectabilis*, which has died and become unsightly should be removed and disposed of in the garbage.
- \* Peonies should be ordered now for September planting. Many Japanese varieties are choice and little known.
- \* Cuttings taken from English ivy now will produce good houseplants this winter.
- \* When dividing irises, make a careful inspection for the iris borer and destroy any infested roots.
- \* Begin to order your fall bulbs now. It is better to order early than to be disappointed when they are out of stock.
- \* Potatoes can be dug as soon as the tops have died. You can dig them as needed. They store better in the ground than in your house.
- \* Eggplants and peppers are now bearing. Keep the matured fruit picked so the younger ones will develop.
- \* Tie up cauliflower heads now by pulling the leaves over the top and fastening with a string. Then they will blanch properly.
- \* Save tomato seeds from the most healthy, heavily fruited plants to start for next year.
- \* You can sow lettuce seeds now for a late crop this fall.
- \* The old canes should be cut from raspberries now that the fruiting season is over.
- \* Begin to prepare dead spots in your lawn for reseeding at the end of this month. If the grass is brown and standing upright, it is just dormant waiting for cooler and wetter weather in the fall. Remove any dead areas and one week before seeding apply a high phosphorous fertilizer to help the new seedling's root development.
- \* There is no reason why the cold frame cannot be used from now until winter for growing crops such as lettuce and beets.
- \* Many of the herbs can be cut and dried at this time of year to prepare them for winter's culinary uses. Store them in a cool, airy and shady place for best results.

## GARDENING TIPS FOR SEPTEMBER

- \* Wisteria vines that have refused to bloom may be root-pruned at this season. This may not prove to be successful on every plant, but it is worth a try.
- \* Daffodils should be planted in September if possible. They need to develop a good root system before the winter sets in.
- \* Tulips need not be planted for several weeks, but it is wise to place your orders now for the bulbs before they are out of stock.
- \* Crocuses, snowdrops, chionodoxas, scillas and other small bulbs should be planted as early as possible.
- \* Hyacinths and daffodils to be forced for winter color should be potted and plunged into a cellar or trench for root making.

- \* Strawflowers or everlastings should be picked just as the bud begins to open, tied loosely in bunches, and permitted to hang head down for several weeks while they dry.
- \* Plant a tree peony for a change. The best time to set them out is during the next few weeks. Bone meal is a good fertilizer for them. Remember to give them a little bit of cover for the winter.
- \* Gourds for winter decoration should be picked before the first frost. The stem should be cut two inches above the fruit which then can be brought in the house to dry.
- \* Bleeding heart can be safely divided in the fall.
- \* Divide and plant peonies this month so they will have time to become established before the first frost. Again, a handful of bone meal is just what the plant ordered.
- \* The herbaceous border can be remade at this time of year, with the exception of the fall flowering perennials. Make sure you add organic matter to the hole before replanting.
- \* Purchase ferns and other house plants now so they can become accustomed to the house conditions before winter sets in.
- \* This is also a good time to set out plants of the Christmas Rose, *Helleborus niger* in a partially shade area.
- \* If radishes are started in a cold frame at this time, they will be ready to eat before snow comes.
- \* Many ornamental trees may be planted successfully in the fall, with the exception of magnolias and tulip trees. Larches and other trees that start their growth early in the spring should always be set out in the fall. Fall is also the best time to plant lilacs.
- \* Don't forget that newly planted trees need an abundance of water, especially heading into the winter. This applies to evergreens as well as deciduous trees.
- \* Reseed bare spots in your lawn as soon as possible in September so they will be established before the winter sets in.
- \* Ornamental figures in the garden can be cleaned of lichens by washing them with soap and water and a brush. Make sure to thoroughly rinse the statue afterwards.



There is only ONE Gardening Guru, David Daehnke!

David has over 25 years of experience in the horticulture field, from running his own landscaping business to being Executive Director of three botanical gardens.

He wants you to be the best gardener you can, teaching

simple, smart, organic gardening practices which are safe to you, your family, your pets and OUR environment. David is a well-renowned speaker, lecturing to garden clubs, civic organizations and businesses with a fun and informative style. To schedule David for your next event or visit to learn more about safe organic gardening practices, visit his web site at:

[www.thegardeningguru.com](http://www.thegardeningguru.com)

# Natural Pesticides

*By David Daehnke*



How would you like to know a few homemade pesticide recipes that are not only safe, but will cost you next to nothing? It's still possible to keep your garden free from pests without toxins and harmful chemicals. Most chemical pesticides are toxic to humans as well as pets and small animals that may enter your yard or garden. Hopefully the readers of OGT know better and stay away from chemical pesticides. Any chemical that you apply to kill something cannot have a beneficial effect for you, your children, your pets or your garden. That's why homemade pesticides make a lot more sense.

Here are a few of the most common homemade pesticide recipes for your houseplants, yard and garden.

## Ants

This is my personal favorite. When you see the small “sugar” ants on your cabinet or outside, mix two parts molasses, 1 part sugar and one part bread or brewers’ yeast, and set this mix where the ants are. When they ingest the mixture, the sugar activates the yeast and the ants “pop”. Now granted this does take some time, but it is quite effective. When I lecture to garden clubs and mention this method, some people may cringe, but what do you think happens when you apply a chemical pesticide?

## Snails and Slugs

Diatomaceous earth is a powder-like dust made of tiny marine organisms called diatoms. It is effective on soft-bodied insects as well as snails and slugs. Just spread it on top of the soil in a ring around the base of your hostas and it works by cutting and irritating these soft organisms yet is harmless to other organisms. You can also put out shallow dishes of beer to trap snails and slugs, where they die a happy inebriated death. Personally I hate this method because beer is better drunk cold than wasted on slugs. Also a ring of granular lime around your plants will do the same as diatomaceous earth, but cost a lot less. Usually a 50 pound bag of granular lime costs \$5 and will last a long time if kept dry.

## To Keep Bugs Away

This is the safest natural “deterrent” pesticide for any home gardener and is effective on a variety of bugs and insects. Mix 3 tablespoons of liquid detergent into a gallon of water. Use in a sprayer bottle for houseplants. This also works for aphids and whiteflies on outside plants, plus it will help keep your leaves clean and allow for proper release of oxygen from the leaves pores. Also try mixing 1 clove garlic, 1 small hot pepper and 1 quart water in a blender. Pour into a spray bottle and apply to plants. Putting hot sauce on a cotton ball in a house plant pot will also repel pests.



## To Control Garden Pests

Gather together a collection of dead bugs, crush them up and mix with water. Strain the mix until it will come out of a spray bottle. Only use this mix outside.

### Spearmint Hot Pepper Horseradish Spray

This is effective on many different kinds of outside bugs and insects and should be an outside spray. You need 1/4 cup of hot red peppers, 1/2 gallon water, 1/4 cup of fresh spearmint, 1/4 cup horseradish, both root and leaves, 1 tablespoon of liquid detergent, 1/4 cup green onion tops (sounds like a great hot sauce). Loosely chop and mix the spearmint leaves, horseradish, onion tops and peppers together with enough water to cover everything. Let the mixture sit for a couple hours so all of the wonderful oils disperse, then strain the solution through cheese cloth. Add a half-gallon of water to the strained solution and add the detergent. You can use this to spray almost any plant safely. Store the mixture for a few days in a cool place. This mixture is also useful if deer are a problem in your yard. With all deterrent sprays, remember that a rain can wash off your spray and reduce the effectiveness. Reapplying the mixture after a rain is a good practice and will help keep it effective.



### Homemade Pesticide For Roses

In your blender make a solution of leaves from a tomato plant 4 pints of water and a tablespoon of cornstarch. Strain the mix and spray on roses as a

natural pesticide. Keep any unused spray refrigerated and it will last a few weeks. As with any mixture you are storing in a refrigerator, please keep it out of reach of young children and label the container. Even though these controls are natural, they can and will cause nausea if drank. Think about drinking a bottle of hot sauce - your stomach will not be feeling well!



### Ticks

Ticks are anywhere and everywhere this year due to the mild winter we had. There are many, and I repeat MANY chemical companies out there there will come to your home and spray nasty chemicals on your yard. The simplest and easiest method is to purchase garlic spray from your local garden center and start spraying from your house working your way out to your property boundaries. Garlic contains a natural sulfur compound the tick despise. This simple spray works wonders and is safe.

Natural pesticides can work well for any home gardener and are much safer for you and your family. After you try a few of these recipes you'll understand that they really work. If you want to control pests naturally instead of chemically, homemade pesticides may be the ideal choice for you, and you too can share this information with you neighbors and start a new revolution of chemical free insect control.

*David Daehnke is widely known as "The Gardening Guru" and can be heard on WGHT 1500 AM ([www.ghtradio.com](http://www.ghtradio.com)). David is also available for lectures. Please visit his web site, [www.thegardeningguru.com](http://www.thegardeningguru.com) for more useful organic gardening information.*

## FARMING WITH A HIGHER PURPOSE – Organic Essential Oil Farms

*By Suzanne VanOver*

Organic fruit and vegetable farms focus on the purity of the land so that the foods that are farmed there are more nutritious, safer and infinitely more flavorful. In the same way, Young Living's organic farms focus on nourishment and benefit to our bodies, but in a slightly different way ~ by using plant extracts to ease pain and inflammation, alleviate allergies, repel insects, relieve sunburns, etc., as well as supporting overall good. Being the pseudo hippie types that we are (and proud of it!), we are typically conscious of what we put into our bodies. It is also important to realize that what we put ON our body goes INTO our body. For both reasons, the purity of the land where the flowers, roots, leaves and bark are grown is of utmost importance.

*Strict attention to detail—from the cultivation of virgin soil to the organic seeds they sow to the timing plants harvested—ensures that the oils you obtain from Young Living are the purest, most potent essential oils available. Worm houses throughout their facilities create compost as organic fertilizer, and a mixture of essential oils is actually used to repel insects!! This method is called the Seed to Seal process and is used at each one of their farms located worldwide, as well as those of partner growers, which are continually monitored to ensure this process is followed.*

Young Living is a membership-based company (like BJ's or Costco), and wholesale members have the unique opportunity to be involved in every aspect of their Seed to Seal process. We are invited to be a part of the planting, harvesting and distilling processes! You know the gratification of getting down and dirty in rich soil ~ the smell, the density and the color can be so grounding, but most of us only know this pleasure of working with our own gardens. Imagine the delight of being a part of this

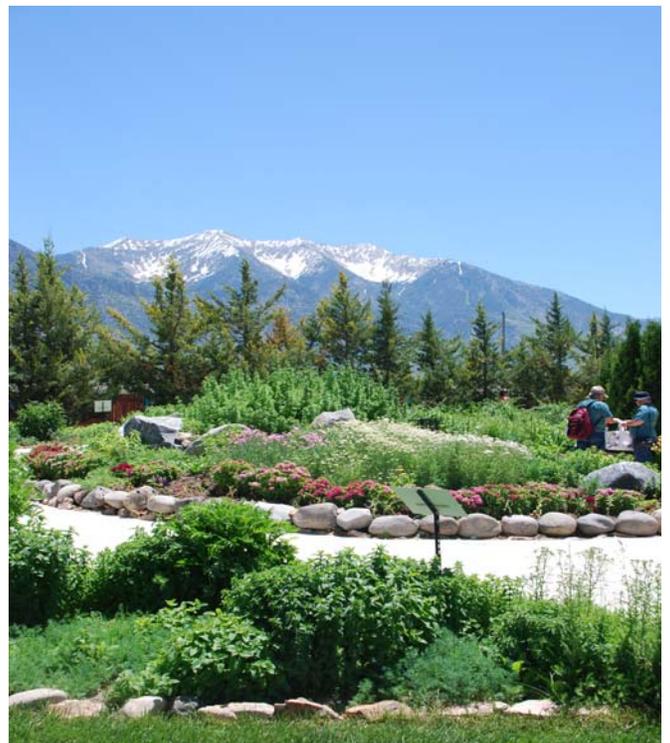
process in another country surrounded by historic castles or snow capped mountains ... and at the end of your hard day's work being able to take a hot tub in the floral water from the distillation process? Sounds like pure, unadulterated bliss to me!!!

So, member or not, if in your domestic or worldly travels, you happen to be in their neck of the woods, stop by a Young Living farm and say hello and see first-hand ... or rather SMELL first-nose .... why people fall in love with these essential oils!

Here's a sneak peek into the farms around the world:

### *Mona, Utah*

Today, this picturesque farm surrounded by breathtaking views of Mount Nebo encompasses nearly 1,600 acres to showcase vibrant lavender fields in the summer months and is home to the largest privately-owned essential oil distillery in the world. Although many different crops are grown for research and display, only Roman chamomile, hyssop, clary sage, golden rod and lavender are grown here for distillation for the world market.



Late April through early September, visitors are treated to a variety of activities during their visit, including a horse-drawn wagon rides around the farm, tours of the greenhouses and distilleries, paddle boat rides and even rock wall climbing.

And, if you've ever wanted to taste a scoop of heaven, try their lavender ice cream during your visit! It's something that will keep you dreaming of this farm for years to come! Reservations can be made throughout the year for any of these activities by calling the Visitor's Center at 1-800-371-0819. Young Living Lavender Farm is also a perfect place for family reunions, company parties, and wedding receptions!

This year on July 14<sup>th</sup>, you can also be apart of one of Utah's most unique 5K races ~ the famous Run Through the Lavender 5K / Half Marathon Race. Compete in an invigorating race to win great prizes or simply enjoy a leisurely stroll through fragrant lavender.



### ***St. Marie's, Idaho***

Celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this summer, this facility consists of over 200 acres of pristine farmland near the small logging town of St. Maries, Idaho. In the last few months, workers planted over 7,000 Western red cedars and Douglas Fir trees, as well as 40 acres of Melissa (also known as Lemon Balm), were planted. To schedule a visit, please call (208) 245-2745.

### ***Highland Flats, Idaho***

Originally drawn to rescue this farm where Christmas trees were being cut and burned, Young Living exchanged the trees for clearing the land. This began their annual Balsam Fir Harvest, where many of our distributors come from all over the world to join in the hard work of distilling essential oil in the

cold month of January. Reforestation efforts continue and over 50,000 new Blue Spruce and Balsam Fir saplings were planted.



### ***Simiane-la-Rotonde, France***

Well-known for its rolling hills and farms of fragrant lavender, the region of Provence, France, is home to the only American-owned farm in the country and is also celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012.

Summer-long festivals abound and some of the natives believe that the scent of lavender exerts its calming, uplifting effects on the villages and people of the area, encouraging feelings of joyful celebration.



### *Guayaquil, Ecuador*

In Chongong, a small farming community outside of Guayaquil, this farm boasts over 2,300 acres of a variety of exotic plants are being grown and harvested for distillation, as well as plants such as oregano, ylang ylang, basil, eucalyptus and more. Young Living also buys crops from growers and wild crafters, who deliver their plants to Young Living's Finca Botanica Aromatica Farm, where we have three 14,000-liter distillers, the largest of any of our farms. Because of the optimal temperature and climate, this farm enjoys three crops versus just one growing season at any of Young Living's other farms. They are also finding that plants just grow differently in this part of the world; oregano being grown in Ecuador has 27 more chemical compounds than the oregano that we source from Turkey, opening up even more possibilities for therapeutic use!

Their newly-rennovated spa is now open and boasts to a very special experience ~ hot tubs filled with floral water of ylang ylang, rosewood and other exotic fragrances to soothe and relax you, as well as a variety of massage services and much more!

This property also home to the Young Living Academy, where many of the farm workers' children ages 5-14 are educated. It is also open to parents of the students and other adults in the Chongon community to attend night classes to learn English and other skills.

For more information, you can check out Suzanne's website at [www.suzannevanover.com](http://www.suzannevanover.com) You can become a Facebook friend at <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100002085192356>, to see Suzanne's daily tips on using essential oils in your life!



## Suzanne VanOver

(973) 479-2782

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Facebook: Essential Oils



Individual Health Consultations  
Home Oil Gatherings  
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~ *Better Living through Nature's Gifts* ~

# Great Organic Expectations

*By Lorraine Foley*

It's one thing to manage a garden but are you ever prepared enough to manage client expectations, especially when pests and diseases raise their ugly head? I work sustainably and this is received in a very positive light by all, however when the first bout of black spot appears on roses there is concern about how fast this disease can be treated. Assurances about holistic approaches that include regular watering at root level, nutrient applications and good cultural methods do not make the grade, especially when a colony of aphids covers leaves and buds. It has been a very cold, wet and windy spring this year which created the perfect conditions for fungal diseases. Also, the cold has impacted on predator insects. As a result pest populations, especially aphids, have exploded unchecked. This does not fair too well for the garden with individual pest species for roses, berberis, broad bean and hellebores playing havoc with their health!



How is a client expected to react when their beloved garden is consumed by barbarous alien forms that spread disease and weaken their favorite roses? Blaming the weather sounds lame, however the slow

response of the predator population is worth examining. Was it the cold and wet spring or were they sprayed with insecticides so frequently in the past that their population has collapsed with dire consequences for the garden?

I have decided to adapt an integrated pest control programme as some plants show signs of weakness that cannot be ignored. I begin by spraying roses infested with green fly with strong jets of water. If the problem persists I apply insecticide soap to targeted areas only. I continue to feed problem plants with potassium (K) but not nitrogen (N) as this attracts aphids. All roses have a thick rich organic mulch to hold moisture which feeds the plant with nutrients sustainably. All diseased leaf litter is gathered up and removed to the garbage. I never compost this type of material. A well fed rose or any plant for that matter is not immune to disease and pest attacks but can cope better.

It is worth noting that some pests are needed as food for insecticide birds especially during the nesting season. Also, wasps consume large quantities of aphids as well as pollinate flowers, so insecticide soaps must be used as a last resort only and in moderation in order to protect these useful soldiers of the garden.

For gardeners despairing with organic methods, especially when everything seems to be going wrong, take a deep breath and focus on creating an environment that suits plants, birds and insects. It is about striking a balance. Disease and pest attacks can be controlled successfully by sustainable means, however it is a slower process. It requires patience, faith and more predators! As the weather improves so too will the flowering capacity of garden stalwarts such as hypericum, helenium, verbena, dianthus and aquilegia which defy all disease and pests with their eternal good humor and blooms.

*Lorraine Foley is a professional gardener and garden writer who specializes in creating sustainable gardens and promoting wildlife havens.*

[www.wildlandscape.com](http://www.wildlandscape.com)

# Tomatoes ...Heirlooms, Hybrids and Grafts...

*By Laura Taylor*

My father loved machines, especially airplanes and cars. In fact, he was a collector. I don't remember a time when he had fewer than 15 cars and most of the time he had over 20 in his collection. Some of the cars were basic, utilitarian vehicles. They got you where you needed to go but had no bells and whistles. Those were the Pontiacs, Dodges and Chevy Impalas. Those cars may have been a necessary part of life, but it was the exotic cars that really got him revved up. Jaguars, Porsches, Lamborghinis and Ferraris...now, those were the machines that he was passionate about. My Dad wasn't a flashy man, rather he enjoyed the intricacies and nuances of each make. He loved working on the engines to discover what made them unique and exquisite. I was very close to my Dad, so I grew up with that same love for automobiles. In addition, I inherited his collector's mentality.

My Dad wasn't much of a tomato fan. He could take them or leave them. But he got a real kick out of my obsession with them and, being my Father's daughter, I've never been happy with just a few, so I have a collection. My tomato garden beds are filled with 150 tomato plants, about 120 varieties. I grow mostly Heirloom tomatoes but there are a few Hybrids in the mix. Sure, they're all tomatoes, but vastly different. Some are Chevys and others are Ferraris.



In a broad sense, heirloom plant species are vegetables, flowers, and fruits grown from seeds that are passed down from generation to generation. The seeds are at least 50 years old. Heirloom tomato seeds have not been genetically altered. They're exactly as Mother Nature made them. You can often recognize Heirlooms by their irregular shapes; many are ribbed or have multiple lobes and they grow in many colors including orange, yellow, dark purple or green. Sure, there are red heirloom tomatoes, too. My personal favorites happen to be bi-colored.



Hybrids, on the other hand, are bred to produce crops that are uniform in taste and appearance. They're more disease resistant than Heirlooms. Hybrids produce high yields of crops at a low cost. Seeds from hybrids are sterile and cannot be passed down, so if you save seed from a hybrid and plant it next season, it will not result in the same tomato from which you saved it. Instead, the result will be one of the parent plants. Hybrid tomatoes are mass produced, often picked when green and then shipped great distances to warehouses awaiting purchase. To me, Hybrid tomatoes are consistent and predictable but lacking in color and personality, like your basic transportation vehicle.

Most tomatoes that you buy in the local grocery store are hybrids. They're the same shape (round or oval), same color (red) and when you gently cup one in your hand they are, more often than not, hard. That's not the worst of it. This is the tomato that so many people will buy. They'll go home, slice it and notice that it's white inside. Take a bite and it's almost flavorless. That, my friends, is the hybrid tomato.

The biggest difference between heirlooms and hybrid tomatoes is flavor. Heirlooms are unquestionably more flavorful and have a complexity of taste that isn't found in hybrids. The heirlooms tend to have thinner skins and are overall more fragile than hybrids. You won't see them piled high in truck beds to be shipped someplace. These beauties can be downright finicky. Some are more temperamental than others, making them more prone to disease or low yields. Sounds like one of the exotic cars to me. Finicky or not, I'll take a Porsche over a Chevy any day of the week!



So, we've got hybrids, sturdy, consistent and relatively tasteless and heirlooms, full of flavor and character, but sometimes prone to disease and difficult to grow. Wouldn't it be nice to get the best of both worlds? Something in the middle, like a sporty sedan?

Well, now we can! Tomato growers, maybe we can have it all. It's like the Porsche Panamera – the sports car that gets the kids to and from school, soccer and ballet and then is gorgeous, powerful and prestigious enough for you to make your grand entrance at the social event of the year!

Welcome, grafted tomatoes. Now available to home growers, grafted tomatoes offer us Heirloom varieties grafted onto incredibly strong root stock. The root stock, often taken from wild tomatoes, is more resistant to disease and grows much larger than conventionally grown plants. Larger roots will grow stronger plants that are less sensitive to cooler

temperatures, produce for a longer period of time and will reward the grower with a higher yield of tasty fruit.

As you can imagine, I've got a grafted tomato collection growing in my garden. I have 14 varieties, with some duplicates so I can compare results growing in the ground or in containers. I've also got some conventional plants of the same varieties growing. It's like taking them all for a test drive. I'll compare the subtleties of each. I can't say yet whether the grafts will be dependable and consistent or more like over the top exotic cars. Either way I'm going to have fun finding out and, with every tomato I harvest and every bite I take, I'll be thinking of my Dad.



*Laura Taylor is passionate about organic vegetable growing at her home in the in the San Fernando Valley. She sowed her first vegetable patch over 17 years ago with a variety of summer vegetables. With each spring Laura found herself creating additional garden spaces to accommodate her growing obsession with home grown vegetables and tomatoes. Laura now grows a riot of season vegetables along with over 90 varieties of tomatoes. She brings her passion for growing, cooking, teaching and bringing people together through her company, Laura Taylor at Home. Classes are offered in topics related to growing vegetables, cooking and needlearts. In addition, Laura has created a line of tomato-themed stationery as well as authored and self-published Tomato Calendar and Growing Guide. The 2012 Tomato Calendar and Growing Guide is available through Laura's website, [www.LauraTaylorAtHome.com](http://www.LauraTaylorAtHome.com)*

# Herb Gardening

By Maureen Farmer



## *What is an Herb?*

According to Merriam-Webster a herb is a seed-producing annual, biennial, or perennial that does not develop persistent woody tissue but dies down at the end of a growing season and is valued for its medicinal, savory, or aromatic qualities.

As the availability of dried herbs in grocery stores increased, the practice of growing herbs declined. The recent rise in the popularity of ethnic foods and the fact that fresh herbs are more flavorful than some dried herbs, has led to a resurgence in gardeners growing at least a few herbs for fresh use, drying or freezing. The increasing interest in herbal medicine has also helped make herb growing more popular again.

## *Requirements for Growing Herbs*

Most herbs need a sunny location. When plants receive six to eight hours of full sunlight each day, more flavorful oils are produced. If you don't have a good, sunny location, many herbs will tolerate light shade, but their growth and quality will be limited.

Herbs prefer well drained soil with a pH between 6.5 and 7.0. Mix compost into the soil to increase

organic matter and retain moisture during dry conditions.

Few insects or diseases attack herbs. In some localities, rusts infect mints. In hot, dry weather, spider mites may damage some herbs.

## *Growth Cycles*

Annual herbs produce foliage, flowers, and seed in one growing season and then die. A gardener can collect the seeds and store them over the winter or purchase seeds every year. Sometimes, the seeds will fall to the ground, survive the winter and produce new plants the next growing season. Annual herbs include basil and cilantro.

Many culinary herbs are perennials and live more than two growing seasons. Perennials grown from seed may grow slowly the first year but gain vigor and maturity in the second year. Herbaceous perennials die back over the winter and return in the spring. In colder climates, some perennial herbs may completely die during the harsh winter months. Woody perennials such as lavender have stems that survive and continue to grow year after year.

## *Propagation Methods*

You can grow many herbs from seed. Sow the seeds indoors in pots or flats indoors during the late winter months and place them in a sunny location. As they grow, you can transplant them into pots or plant them in the garden after the danger of frost has past. Anise, coriander, dill and fennel do not transplant well and should be sown directly into the garden. As a general rule, sow seeds at a depth of twice their diameter.



Divide large, overgrown perennial herbs in early spring before new growth occurs. Dig up the old plant and cut or pull it apart into sections. Re-plant the sections and keep them moist until they become well established. Division works well for tarragon, chives and mint.

Take cuttings from well-established herbs with healthy tip growth during late spring and summer. Fall cuttings often take longer to root. Cut just below a node to form a three to five inch long cutting. Most herbs should grow roots in two to four weeks. Lavender, lemon balm, scented geraniums, sage and rosemary can be easily propagated from cuttings.

Layering is the simplest method to increase perennial herbs such as thyme, lemon balm, winter savory, sage, bay and rosemary. The basic principle is to produce roots on a stem while it is still attached to the parent plant. Select a healthy, flexible branch near the ground and bend the top six to ten inches of the stem into a vertical position. Bury the stem adjacent to the bent portion a few inches deep, and anchor it with a wire loop. Insert a small stake to hold the top upright and water thoroughly. Allow the rooted shoot to remain in place until the following spring. Then cut the stem to detach the new plant from the parent plant and plant it in a desired location.



### ***Harvesting and Storage Preparation***

Depending on the herb, harvesting may involve one or more plant parts. In most cases, the leaves are harvested, but in some cases the flowers, seeds or roots are edible. Dried herbs lose quality in two to three years, so discard them if you haven't used them within that time frame.

Ideally you should cut herbs in the morning after the dew has evaporated from the leaves. Harvest on a dry day that has been preceded by at least two sunny days. Optimally, cut the stems when the flower buds are just beginning to open. Mints, however, have the most essential oil in their leaves when the spikes are in full bloom. Never cut more stems than you can dry at one time. Cut back perennial herbs to about half of their height and cut down annuals to a few inches. You can completely remove annual herbs at the end of the season.

Wash the harvested plants in cool water immediately after gathering and spread them on towels. Pat them gently with a towel until dry. Dry your herbs in a dark, well-ventilated room with a temperature between 70 and 90 degrees F. Air conditioning is helpful, as it reduces humidity in the air. You can use frames covered with cheesecloth or other netting, or metal window screens with cheesecloth laid on top for drying. Herb leaves should dry in three to four days under proper conditions. In humid weather, you may need to spread the herbs on a cookie sheet and dry them in an oven at about 125 degrees F for a few minutes before placing them in an airtight container.

You can remove the leaves from the stems of basil, dill, lemon balm, lovage, mint, sage, lemon verbena and tarragon. Spread these leaves in single layers for quickest drying. Herbs with smaller leaves can be dried on the stems. These herbs include thyme, summer and winter savory, rosemary, oregano and marjoram. Strip the leaves from the stems after they have dried.



Some herbs do not dry well and should be frozen instead. After washing, blanch them in boiling, unsalted water for 50 seconds, cool quickly in ice water, place on a towel and blot them dry. Spread them in a single layer on paper or cookie sheets and place them in the freezer. You can freeze dill, chives and basil without blanching. After the herbs are frozen, place them in airtight plastic containers or bags.

Dig up the roots of angelica and lovage in the late fall or early spring. Wash them thoroughly and then slice or split the large roots. Place the pieces in thin layers on screens and turn the slices several times a week. After they are partially dry, finish drying them in an oven at low heat and place them in an airtight container for storage. It may take six to eight weeks for roots to dry completely. When dry, the root piece should snap when you bend it.

You can grow and process dill, caraway, fennel and anise seeds. When the plants begin to mature and

yellow, cut the heads of the plants containing the seeds, leaving a short stem. Place them on a drying tray for five or six days until the seeds fall fairly easily from the heads. Remove the chaff, and allow the seeds to continue to dry for another week. Stir them frequently. Store the seeds in airtight containers after they are completely dried.

Try growing some herbs or new varieties of herbs this year. You'll love how fresh herbs enhance the flavor of your home-cooked meals.

*Maureen Farmer is master gardener and the owner and creator of The Farmer's Garden website ([www.thefarmersgarden.com](http://www.thefarmersgarden.com)). The site is a free surplus garden exchange location where you can buy, sell, give away or trade your excess home-grown produce. She is an avid gardener and also a former Board member of Urban Oaks Organic Farm in Connecticut.*

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# Feed. The. Soil.

*Grow nutrient-dense veggies in partnership with beneficial bacteria and friendly fungi.*

*By Geri Laufer*

There are many good reasons to garden. The process is both therapeutic and sensual; the exercise and fresh air are invigorating, and the cycle from sowing to flower is deeply gratifying. But producing and harvesting fresh, organic, home-grown food is the most important consideration for many gardeners.

Families are searching for options. Tired of the chemical overload bombarding people from every side today, they want the healthiest, most nutrient-dense vegetables in order to safely nourish their children and themselves. While local farmers markets are terrific, the obvious, simple and inexpensive path to good food is to grow vegetables in the home garden. That way, families get both the choice of varieties and the control they want.

## Soil Flora and Fauna

Good nutrition begins from the ground up. Not all of us are blessed with rich, crumbly, dark brown earth with an open, granular texture and high levels of composted organic matter, but we strive for that ideal. The secret behind that kind of productive, organic soil is the microorganisms living within it. Rich organic soils are teeming with life, ranging from relatively large, visible earthworms that provide aeration and castings, down to an assortment of tiny soil micro-organisms that include beneficial bacteria, actinomycetes, friendly fungi, soil algae, cyanobacteria and soil protozoa.

Members of this “subterranean microherd” are the ultimate recyclers, breaking down composted organic matter into available nutrients that plants can take up and use to produce wholesome fruits and vegetables. In fact, the beneficial soil microherd does all sorts of good, ranging from fighting plant diseases, breaking down poisons and pollutants to harmless molecules, binding soil particles together to

create a porous crumb structure, and help plants in many ways.

In fact, more than 48,000 research articles over the years have demonstrated that the completely natural friendly fungi, mycorrhizal fungi and beneficial bacteria in the soil provide myriad other benefits:

- Up to 1,000 times better absorption of nutrients needed for plant growth and health (!)
- Non-toxic, biodegradable, natural
- Provides a “secondary root system” that supplies extra water and nutrients to higher plants
- Especially beneficial to plants in nutrient-poor soils; improves uptake of ions
- Increases plant establishment in questionable soils
- Improves absorption of nutrients in acid (low pH) or alkaline (high pH) soils
- Increases water uptake and water holding capacity
- Improves drought tolerance and decreases drought stress
- Improves resistance to insect pressure; healthy plants have long been known to survive attacks more easily



- \* Improves resistance to soil pathogens; some of the Friendly Fungi (Trichoderma) naturally out-compete soil-borne fungal diseases
- \* Friendly Fungi actually trap harmful nematodes
- \* Eliminates or reduces the need for chemical fertilizers and saves money
- \* Eliminates dangerous pesticides
- \* Improves seed germination
- \* Improves survival rates in pots, planters and plant nurseries
- \* Improves transplanting rates and decreases transplant shock for landscape plants
- \* Reduces number of replacements for plants under warranty
- \* Increases productivity and yield at harvest
- \* Produce healthier, safer foods due to improved mineral uptake
- \* Increases mineral nutrition available to your family in harvested crops
- \* Improves soil structure and reduces soil compaction by increasing friability, aggregation, flocculation and porosity
- \* Restores ruined soils (e.g. strip mines) and helps plants to grow in barren soils; new research shows that some bacteria biodegrade plastic(!)
- \* Helps plants survive soils contaminated by salts and heavy metals
- \* Enhances the plant's ability to utilize water and fertilizer, significantly reducing the ever-rising cost these elements
- \* Reduces carbon footprint for landscaping and greenhouses because inoculated plants require less water, nutrients and actually sequester carbon
- \* Reduces usage (and costs) of irrigation
- \* The death of Friendly Fungi releases nutrients contained within them to the rest of the microcosm
- \* Supplies phosphorous in an available form and excrete nitrogen as  $\text{NH}_4^-$
- \* Sequesters or locks away excess nitrogen and other nutrients that might otherwise enter and pollute the groundwater
- \* Bacteria fix nitrogen in a form plants can use
- \* Some Friendly Fungi are on duty in hot summer soils, while others work best in cold winter soils

## Compost and Manure

So how do gardeners keep the microorganisms stoked? Rich compost and well-rotted manure provide organic fuel for the microbial population and also add solids that physically improve both clay and sandy soils, but other options are also available. While I was growing up, my grandparents always had a covered barrel of “manure tea” behind the garage (an anaerobic culture made of a few shovels-full of grass-fed-cow manure topped off with water) and they used to dip out ladles-full of the liquid filled with water-soluble nutrients and disease controllers to boost and protect plant growth.

Today's gardeners have the extra consideration that animal manures might result from animals treated with antibiotics and/or hormones, and some organic gardeners make the conscious decision to stay away from animal manure. Similarly, savvy organic gardeners today are selective about the plant matter they add to their compost, refraining from using municipal compost that may contain pesticide residues like glyphosate herbicides, poisonous insecticides or toxic chemical fungicides.



## Aerated Compost Tea

Latest in scientific research is aerated compost tea that involves brewing oxygenated “tea” from the same rich compost using an aquarium aerator during a 24 to 48 hour period. Not only are the valuable water soluble nutrients available, but a large population of beneficial aerobic bacteria and friendly aerobic fungi will breed in the aerated tea. There are many variables with aerated compost tea. Depending on the origin of the compost (green leafy = higher levels of bacteria, brown woody = higher levels of fungi), the season, temperature, rainfall and so forth, the teas will have a different mix of microbes available for the veggies, and will have a different smell, color or foaminess based on the mix, and will affect the garden differently.

Research has shown that supplemental applications of naturally occurring beneficial bacteria and friendly fungi can form rapid associations with plant roots and boost their ability to absorb water and nutrients, resulting in nutrition-packed fruits and vegetables for home harvesting.

## CT-Myco (Instant Compost Tea with Mycorrhizae Alternative)

A quicker, easier option than brewing aerated compost tea is to purchase a biological soil inoculant containing the same beneficial bacteria and friendly fungi, mix it with water, and then pour it on the garden.

One example of a biological soil inoculant is SoilNoc® Instant Compost Tea Alternative (CT-Myco) , a premium-grade soil and foliage conditioner that contains select blends of naturally occurring, stabilized bacteria and multiple friendly fungi species, along with an ideal ratio of molasses, kelp extract and humic and fulvic acids that plants need for good growth.

This method is thorough and efficient because Instant CT Compost Tea Alternative is ready to mix with water and is instantly ready to use. That’s it. Just run a hose right to where the veggies are growing, put the powered formula in a bucket or

sprayer, fill with water and pour on the plants with no waiting, No 12+ weeks of composting. No expensive aerator. No 48 hours of brewing. No guessing. Just Growth as nature intended™.

Instant Compost Tea Alternative with Myco (CT-Myco) contains carefully selected synergistic natural soil bacteria and fungi including *Trichoderma*. The microherd breaks down organic molecules and makes them into available nutrients that plants easily absorb. To purchase a wide variety of biological soil inoculants, visit <http://www.agverra.com>

*Horticulturist Geri Laufer is a dirt gardener and a widely published authority on gardening topics. Her award-winning book Tussie-Mussies (Workman Publishing) is the definitive work on the Language of Flowers. Geri’s media appearances include Good Morning America, NPR and Home Matters. Former hats include Georgia Cooperative Extension Service County Agent, Gwinnett Tech Environmental Horticulture Adjunct Professor and Atlanta Botanical Garden Public Relations Manager/newsletter editor/web content manager. Currently [GardenGeri.com](http://www.GardenGeri.com) provides PR and social media strategies for horticulture companies and a regular monthly gardening commentary on Atlanta NPR affiliate WABE-FM. Visit [www.gardengeri.com](http://www.gardengeri.com).*



# Citrus in Containers, Organically?

Why yes you can!!

*By Darren Sheriff*

With the price of groceries going through the roof, people are trying to find a way to either cut back or grow whatever they can themselves. When it comes to Orange Juice or any other kind of Citrus juice (Lemon, Grapefruit, etc.) most people think they are at the mercy of Florida or California growers. Just to play devil's advocate here, they do have many things working against them, diseases, government, tropical storms and so on. This is why the prices are so high and going higher. So why not try to help yourself out here? Many types of Citrus can be grown successfully in containers, especially if you have a large enough pot. Don't expect as big a tree as one grown in the ground however. Also, it is very important to find citrus trees grafted onto Poncirus trifoliata or Flying Dragon. This type of root stock dwarfs the tree (still giving you full size fruit) and gives it a few extra degrees of cold hardiness. If you can't find that specific rootstock don't give up hope, there are other things that can be done and still get fruit.

The biggest advantage of containerized trees is that they can be protected during freezing temperatures by growing them in an enclosed area. If you have a greenhouse this is a no brainer, but let's say you are not lucky enough to have one, easy enough. A sunroom will work or maybe a spare bedroom that is only used for your mother in law, she doesn't come visit that often anyway. Part of the garage will also work. Then all you need is some grow lights. Please don't make the mistake of leaving them on 24/7, the sun is not up that long is it? 10-12 hours will be great. Let's start with the pot first. A nursery standard 15 gallon pot would be a good one to start out with. Once the tree out grows this one, you can move it up to a 30 gallon. A piece of advice though, either build a relationship with some really big, strong men or put casters of some kind on a 30 gallon, it gets pretty heavy. If you happen to see a landscape company working in your neighborhood, stop and ask if they happen to have any pots and if you can have one or two of either of these sizes. Many times they are more than happy to get rid of them. They won't have to haul it back to their shop.

Be aware that plastic containers retain moisture

longer than other types of pots. As with most plants, allow the upper surface of the soil to become dry to the touch and maybe an inch down, then water thoroughly. Citrus need lots of moisture, but don't like wet feet all the time. When you have the plants indoors and use a saucer under the pot, remember to empty it after the water has drained out, the soil will wick it back up and could cause root rot.

The potting mix you use is really a personal choice. Any good, well draining mix will work. I have found that a Cactus soil works well. A good blend of Peat, Sand, Perlite and Vermiculite will suffice. I have heard of people using Coconut Husk Chips, this author has no hands on experience with this however.

Good nutrition is essential but over fertilization can result in excessive vegetative or leafy growth and poor fruiting. Citrus Tone, manufactured by Espoma is the best fertilizer I have found. It is all organic and works like a charm. An occasional foliar spray (spraying the leaves) with Fish Emulsion will also benefit the tree. If you are planning on moving the tree indoors during very cold nights (below 30 degrees) You can fertilize every 6-8 weeks and foliar feed every 2-3 weeks with the fish emulsion, though you may want to leave the fish emulsion out during the Winter, it does tend to smell.

Citrus love sunlight, 8-10 hours or more if possible. Even in Winter. If it is feasible and there is only a brief cold spell, the temps drop at night and you bring it in, bring it back out during the day after it warms up. This is where those casters can come in handy. If you are say in Maine and Summer was only on a Saturday last year, the tree will be fine indoors, as long as it is warm and you have those lights on it. I know of people in Canada that grow Citrus and have some of the best fruit you have ever tasted.



Summer time can bring other problems with container citrus. The temperature in a black pot, outside in 8+ hours of sunlight, can easily reach 120 degrees. Depending on where exactly you live, there are two ways to alleviate this. You know your areas climate, make a good educated guess. First, you can shade the pot with low growing plants in other pots. This will give you a chance to have some flowers around your tree and make a very nice display. Second, paint your pots white. There are many paints designed for plastic, get some of it and paint them white. The white surface will reflect the rays of the sun and keep your roots many degrees cooler.

I mentioned earlier that if you can't find that specific rootstock there are things that can be done. I personally have a Key Lime tree that is in a 30 gallon pot. I keep it topped to about 8 feet and get all kinds of fruit. When it starts to get rootbound, which they do eventually, I root prune it. The basics behind this is, you take it out of the pot, trim off about a third of the roots and repot it in new soil. The trick is to remember to take off as much of the foliage as you do roots to balance out the tree. It will take about a season to come back, but you will be good for a couple of years after that before you have to do it again. One other thing here, just the fact that it is IN a container will tend to keep the tree smaller.

Container citrus have the same pest problems as their in ground counter parts and when compared to other fruit trees, citrus are basically carefree. They tolerate an amazing amount of neglect and still fruit reliably.



Keeping citrus in optimal health will require some vigilance though as they are prone to a myriad of pests.

Scale, spider mites, aphids, citrus leaf miners and whitefly all attack citrus. If you want to look at the bright side, more times than not, you will not have to fight all of these critters at the same time. One year may be bad with aphids, the next year will be bad with whitefly. Doesn't that make you feel better? Here is a list of the main buggers you may/will encounter:

**SCALE& MEALY BUGS** are white, brown or orange stationary insects that suck plant juices. They are most common on the undersides of leaves. Scale can be controlled with horticultural oil and/or insecticidal soap. Try to catch them early when they are in the crawler stage.

**SPIDER MITES** are tiny red or orange arachnids that also feed on plant juices. Spider mites can reproduce very quickly. The effect of spider mites usually is evidenced by yellow or orange speckles on the leaves. They can be controlled with the horticultural oil and insecticidal soaps. A good wash down with the hose or in a bathtub also works in ridding the tree of these critters.

**APHIDS** are another type of sucking insects. They like young new growth and can severely damage emerging growth in the Spring. Aphids are usually in the presence of ants. They get along with each other in a loving way. Ants feed on the sticky honeydew that aphids produce and ants protect and help move around the aphids. Introducing lady bugs to the area will go along way in controlling aphids. Insecticidal soap will also help.

**CITRUS LEAF MINERS** are a recent introduction to the United States. CLM's are a nocturnal moth that lay their eggs on young flushes of growth. After hatching in 4-5 days, the larvae begin tunneling just underneath the leaf surface, creating a squiggly pattern on the leaf. Once in the leaf, the miner is impossible to control. Horticultural oil seems to help in discouraging the moth from laying her eggs. This insect is more of a cosmetic damage problem, though the hole it leaves when leaving the leaf can be an entrance for Citrus diseases.

**WHITEFLY** are particularly bothersome because the damage they cause shows up long after they are gone. They live and breed on the undersides of leaves and feed on the juices of the leaves. Insecticidal soap seems to be the best defense.

**ORANGE DOGS & GRASSHOPPERS** are leaf chewing pests. Orange dogs are the larvae of the Swallowtail Butterfly. Both of these pests can defoliate a young citrus tree in a matter of days if not hours. BT can be used to control the Orange Dogs. Grasshoppers can be picked off and fed to your Hamster or just squashed.

Attracting birds will also help for when they are outside. When bringing the plants in for the Winter, remember to always give them a good inspection and even a good hosing down to remove any unwanted house guests.

No article worth its weight in worm castings would be complete without some kind of list of good varieties to look for. Let me give you one HUGE piece of advice first, there are many quarantines out there in many different states, they can not and should not be shipping Citrus. Check with the nursery you are wanting to deal with to see if they are under any kind of quarantine, the penalties are stiff and you may not even get to see your tree. Here is the list:

**KUMQUATS:** Don't forget to eat the peel and all! Meiwa....one of the better ones for eating fresh Nagami...most often the ones found in grocery stores

**MANDARINS (TANGERINES):**

Kimbrough Satsuma  
Owari Satsuma  
Early St. Anne Satsuma  
Keraji Mandarin  
Juanita Tangerine

**ORANGES:**

Ambersweet Orange  
Hamlin Orange  
Parson Brown Orange

**GRAPEFRUIT:**

Duncan Grapefruit  
Marsh Grapefruit

Pink Marsh Grapefruit

Ruby Red Grapefruit

**OTHERS:**

Calamondin

Meyer Lemon...not a true lemon, a cross between a Lemon and a Sweet Orange

Eustis Limequat

Sunquat

Yuzu

This is, of course, not an all inclusive list, but it is a good starting point.

Growing Citrus is not as hard or time consuming as one might think. The benefits are amazing, fruit that is organically grown and you know what has been applied. Your neighbors will be envious and want to see the tree and fruit. Then to top it all off when they are in flower the smell is almost heavenly. Happy Growing!

*Darren is a South Carolina Nursery and Landscape Association Certified Professional Nurseryman, A Charleston County Master Gardener and works for Lowcountry Nursery. He is on the Charleston County Master Gardener Board of Directors and an active member of the Coastal Carolina Camellia Society. Known as "The Citrus Guy" in the MG and horticultural world, he currently has 51 different varieties of Citrus in his yard, all in containers.*

*Darren is also an Exotic Tropical Fruit buff, growing things many people have never heard of. After being born in New Jersey, living in and graduating from high school in Florida and spending four years in the Marine Corps, Darren finally realized his true passion was in horticulture and has been pursuing that since the early 1990's.*

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*Darren also writes a garden blog which can be seen at <http://www.thecitrusguy.blogspot.com/>*

# Making the most of H<sub>2</sub>O

*By David Daehnke*

As we approach the driest time of the year, especially when plants are actively growing, our attention is directed to the amount of water we use in the garden. On average, plants need 1 inch of moisture per week to remain healthy and vigorous. In August we are lucky to get that in the entire month. Residential water use increases 40 to 50% during summer months due to outdoor water use. I know where I live there is a surcharge during the summer months for water usage, so not only do we need to conserve water for our own use, but it also makes sense dollar wise to conserve water.

One of my favorite ways to conserve water is to use a rain barrel on every downspout of my house. A rain barrel collects and stores rainwater from rooftops to use later for garden watering. Water collected in a rain barrel would normally pour off your roof directly or flow through roof gutter downspouts and become storm water runoff. Depending on your yard, this runoff can travel onto paved surfaces and eventually into a storm drain, not benefiting you or your garden.



The reasons for using a rain barrel (or better yet a series of rain barrels) is that they conserve water and help lower costs (a rain barrel can save approximately 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months), they reduce water pollution by reducing storm water runoff, and my favorite thing, they are inexpensive to buy, easy to build yourself and easy to install. Rain barrels can also be arranged to slowly release the collected rain fall to areas that can soak up the water. To give you an example of just how much rain you can collect from your downspouts, if we have one inch of rain fall on a 1,000 square foot roof, you will collect 623 gallons of water!



Rain barrels should be drained and removed for the winter months to prevent ice damage. It is recommended that you remove the existing downspout and elbow intact and store for reinstallation in the late fall. You can then add another downspout section that will need to be custom cut to an appropriate height above your rain barrel. Two, connected downspout elbows (forming an S shape) or hinged extension should sit about two inches above the rain barrel inlet hole. Fine mesh screen should be used to cover any openings in the rain barrel to prevent mosquitoes and to trap debris. Rain barrels can be installed upon blocks or wooden crate to provide height for gravity flow purposes.

Ready-made rain barrels range from \$89 to \$135 each depending on size, style and added features, and can be found on EBay or you can do an internet search on rain barrels. For local suppliers, inquire at your local home and garden supply store, garden center, nursery, or hardware store.

I personally own rain barrels manufactured by Fiskars ([www.fiskars.com](http://www.fiskars.com)). What drew me to these specific barrels was the diverter that attaches to your downspout. If you simply connect to your downspout and have a heavy rain, your barrel will overflow. Since it is next to your house, the overflow will flow right down to your foundation. To avoid this the diverter from Fiskars allows overflow from your barrel to head back to the downspout avoiding any overflow problems.



The good news is you can purchase just the diverter from Fiskars if you decide to purchase elsewhere or if you would like to build a rain barrel on your own. Just purchase a heavy-duty garbage can (preferably 50 or 55 gallon), a small section of fine mesh screen for the inlet, a ½ inch brass water spout, downspout and 2 elbows, and waterproof silicone sealant. Cut a 5 to 6 inch hole about four inches from the edge of the lid and cover the hole with the fine screen mesh, adhering it to the lid with silicone sealant. Next drill a hole, usually 5/8 inch about two inches from the bottom of the can.

Insert the spout, making sure to have silicone sealant on both the spout and backside of the spout to make sure it is properly sealed. Tighten the nut on the spout and wait 24 hours before using. Follow the directions above for the down spout and base, and voila, instant rain barrel for about half the cost on buying one.

There is one key maintenance item that is especially important. Let's say we have a rainstorm that fills our rain barrel. Since it was a good rain our containers and plantings don't need to be watered right after the rain, so we forget and do not use them. After about one week of steamy weather the water in your barrel will get a little stinky, aka stagnant. I will add about ½ cup of bleach to one rain barrel filled with water. This will help keep stagnation at bay. If you are concerned about the chlorine, remember that just as with swimming pools, chlorine evaporates quickly from the water in hot weather. Just remove the lid of the rain barrels on a hot sunny day and the chlorine will dissipate.

I use my rain barrels mainly for the watering of my container vegetables or newly planted shrubs, trees and perennials from the spring. They have not had enough time to set out enough new roots yet so a hot dry spell can mean disaster for them. Also remember that a deep, thorough watering will create deep roots that will withstand a dry period. Nothing annoys me more than seeing a person out watering their plantings for about 15 minutes with a spray nozzle. This quick watering method will only draw the roots closer to the surface meaning a certain death during a dry spell where watering is banned.

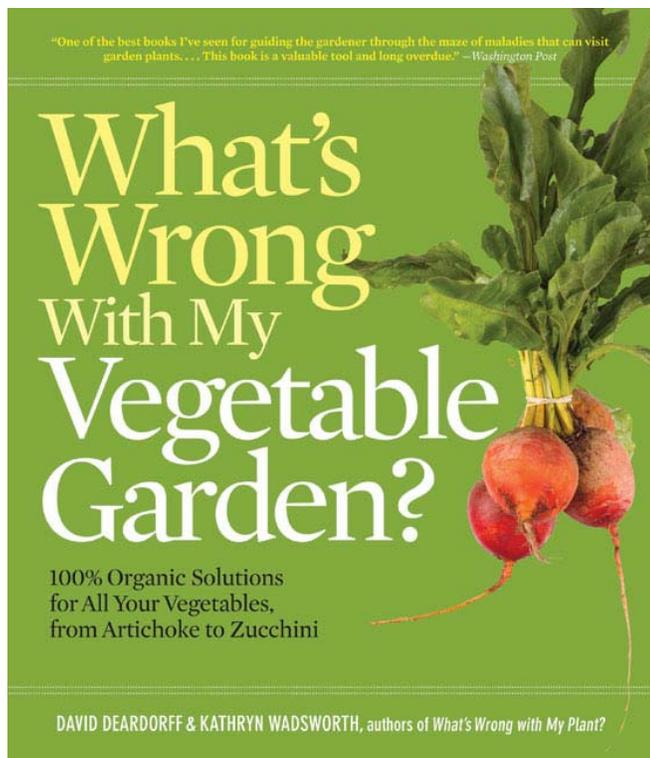
The simple addition of rain barrels to your property will not only save water, but it will also save you dollars on your next water bill!

*David Daehnke is widely known as "The Gardening Guru" and can be heard on WGHT 1500 AM ([www.ghtradio.com](http://www.ghtradio.com)). David is also available for lectures. Please visit his web site, [www.thegardeningguru.com](http://www.thegardeningguru.com) for more useful organic gardening information.*

## Summer Book Review

### What's Wrong With My Vegetable Garden?:

100% Organic Solutions for All Your Vegetables,  
from Artichokes to Zucchini



By David Deardorff and Kathryn Wadsworth

More and more home gardeners are discovering the rewards of growing their own vegetables. But along with the pleasures of homegrown produce come a host of problems: bugs, diseases, and mysterious ailments that don't have an obvious cause. What's a gardener to do?

Don't panic — help is at hand. *What's Wrong With My Vegetable Garden?* teaches you how to keep your vegetables healthy so they're less susceptible to attack, and when problems do occur, it shows you how to recognize the problem and find the right organic solution.

Among the book's highlights are:

- Clear information about how to team with nature to create the best growing conditions for your vegetables.
- Detailed portraits of the most commonly grown vegetables, including growth habit; information on the plant's season;

temperature, soil, light, and water requirements; and best garden uses and planting techniques.

- Illustrated problem-solving guides that enable you to identify at a glance what's ailing your plant.
- Discussions of the most effective organic solutions, ranging from how to modify the growing conditions in your garden to how to cope with and eliminate specific pests and diseases.

If you care about raising the freshest, healthiest, most problem-free vegetables possible, then *What's Wrong With My Vegetable Garden?* will quickly become one of your most essential tools.

What really impressed me about this book was the resources they give to you: conversion charts, recommended reading, where to buy seeds, environmentally friendly remedies for your vegetable plants along with simple, organic information which we all desire to know. Sometimes having a resource like this will be the difference of having more than a successful harvest and something dreadful. This book is one that you will be able to take out into the garden and compare your plant to the color pictures to not only identify the problem but also to have to organic course of action to take to correct the problem.

*Format:* Paperback

*Pages:* 252 pp.

*Book dimensions:* 7" x 9¼ in.

*Images:* 389 color photos

This best seller is available directly from [Timber Press](http://TimberPress.com) or from a local book seller near you. You can win the review copy by simply sending an e-mail to [contest@organicgardentoday.com](mailto:contest@organicgardentoday.com) with your name and address in the body of the e-mail. The winner will be drawn on July 31<sup>st</sup> and shipped ASAP so you can have this reference guide this summer.

OGT would like to thank Timber Press for the review copy of this book.

## Website for the Summer



Back in the summer of 1999, a small group of software engineers, farm activists, and farmers from the Central Coast of California met to talk about how the Internet could contribute to a vibrant future for family farms. The conversation quickly turned to marketing. For many small-scale farmers, marketing was a costly weak spot in the family business. In fact, at this particular meeting, every farmer in the room named it as his or her biggest headache. “I’m a really good farmer, but a lousy salesman,” said one. “I want to spend my time in the fields, not on the phone,” said another. A third farmer said that when people tried his produce, they loved it, and came back. The problem was getting them to find his farm.

Out of this conversation and others like it LocalHarvest was born. Their mission was, and is, to support family farmers’ success by connecting people who are looking for great food with the farms that produce it. They host a national directory of direct-market farms, farmers markets, and related small businesses. They call it a ‘grassroots’ directory because each member creates and maintains their own listing. Listings include a description of the business, photo, event calendar, list of products, and market information. Members of the public use a zip code search or interactive map to find local, direct-marketed food.

By bringing farmers together in a single directory, the LocalHarvest site has become a powerful collective marketing tool. LocalHarvest promotes small farms in the aggregate, and benefits individual small farms all across the country. While members may choose to maintain their own web sites in addition to their LocalHarvest listings, many find LocalHarvest to be the most effective way for new customers to find them.

In 2003, still in need of a way of having the site make money, Guillermo Payet added an on-line catalog. The catalog allows any LocalHarvest member to offer farm products for sale via mail order or local pick up. LocalHarvest takes a 15% commission on all sales made through the catalog (with the exception of CSA shares, which have a lower commission of 6%). Our biggest sellers are CSA shares, fruits, turkeys, seeds, other meats, lavender, herbal products and honey.

The catalog offers about 5,000 products, from heritage turkeys to dried lavender, honey to goat cheese. Though we reserve the right to make a few exceptions, the basic rules are these: products have to be made by the member, and must use a minimum of 50% ingredients produced on the member’s farm or procured directly from a farmer. We do not ship items that can be purchased locally in most places – for example, no produce commonly found at farmers markets. Farmers can, however, choose to offer such products for local pick up or delivery, if they wish.

Whether you are a farmer or a consumer, Local Harvest’s web site will benefit you. Check them out at:

[www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)

WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOUR PHOTOS!



Send your favorite photos to [photos@organicgardentoday.com](mailto:photos@organicgardentoday.com). We want to see your accomplishments, maybe a problem area you would like suggestions for or just pictures of your homestead. OGT is a magazine dedicated to you our readers. We here to help and to offer organic advice to keep you and our environment safe!

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