

Victory Garden Tips for Beginners

NGB's Victory Garden 2.0 Blog Series

Today's Mantra:

"It's OK to make a mistake"

What Kind of Garden do you Want?

Patio containers, small space

Lush landscape, large yard

Small farm, production is key

Know Your Growing Zone

Seattle/Tacoma is 8a or 8b

Higher elevations drop to 7 or 6

Know Your Soil

Clay, loamy, or sandy?

Acidic or alkaline?

Does it contain the nutrients your plants need to thrive?

Terminology:

Soil Amendments

Soil Test

Cover Crops

Extension Office

Plan Your Space

Close by and Convenient

Water readily available

Start small

Know When to Plant

When to start seeds indoors

When to direct sow outdoors

When to plant annuals & edibles

Know Your Space - Hours of Sun/day

Full Sun = 6+ hours

Part Sun = 4-6 hours

Full Shade = < 4 hours

Plan Your Space

Plant larger plants on the north side of your garden and smaller plants on the south.

Plan Your Space

Containers and Raised Beds Can Be A Lifesaver!

Decide What to Plant

Plant for Yourself & Your Family

Plant the Colors & Styles You Like

Consider Annuals & Perennials

Plan Your Garden

Grow From Seed or Transplant?

Or Both?

Plan Your Garden

Grow the easy stuff!

Geraniums, petunias, impatiens

Herbs, peppers, salad greens

Newer Varieties

Plant for Pollinators

Diversity is key

Regional pollinators

Pollinator targets vs. quantity

Plan Your Garden

Follow suggested sowing and planting dates

Plan Your Garden

Learn the difference between cool season and warm season crops and plant them all!

Plan Your Garden

Follow plant spacing recommendations for your plants

Plan Your Garden

Pay attention to mature plant size!

Plan Your Garden

Garden design can be a challenge

Try, try again!

Consult a professional

Today's Mantra:

"It's OK to make a mistake"

Plan Ahead

Use trellises or other support structures

Garden Tool Basics - Containers

Gloves

Trowel and/or fork

Pruners or snippers

Watering hose/wand or can

Garden Tool Basics – In beds

Spade

Rake

Hoe

Loppers

Wheelbarrow

Learn about, and start, composting

Start small

Trial and error

There are a lot of how-to's online

Fertilizer can be your friend

Slow-release fertilizers in the soil

Water soluble can be used on most annuals and vegetables once/week

Gardeners are your friends!

Know what you don't know and know the people who do.

Don't be afraid to ask questions.

Plants DO Die! NBD

Move on...buy more plants

Weeds DO NOT Die!

Mulch and/or plant closely

Use containers

Check often

Know the value of plant labels

You WILL forget

Varieties are important

Don't be afraid to prune

Deadhead flowering plants

Trim herbs to use them

Can help the health of your plants

Don't be afraid to harvest

Frequent pickings can mean a higher yield

FYI – your tomatoes may not look like those you find in the store!

Plants are movable!

Especially perennials

Keep a Journal

Trust me, you'll be glad you did

Do as I suggest, not as I do!

Rotate Plant Types

Switch up root crops, legumes, fruits, etc.

AAS Judge tips:

Don't be afraid. The most experienced gardeners strike out too, but they keep trying. Gardening is as much about the experience as the end result. ~*Owen Vanstone*

You don't need to try as hard as you think. Start with good soil preparation and a little bit of feed and you will be successful. You just need to put them in a situation where they can thrive, and they will pretty much do all the work themselves. Sure, you may want to stake or cage some of the more unruly indeterminate beasties out there, but even if you don't, they will still produce for you. ~*Samuel J. Schmitz*

Start Small. Anyone can easily become overwhelmed by the amount of work and dedication needed for home gardening. ~*Cody Whynot*

Choose easy to grow, hardy plants, start small, get your hands dirty, and watch them throughout the season. **The best fertilizer is a gardener's shadow.** ~*Jesse Dahl*

I think fear keeps people from trying to garden. Start small. It can be ever so rewarding when you succeed. ~*Barbara Park*

So when asked this, I always refer to Miss Frizzle from the PBS show The Magic School Bus... "Take Chances, Make Mistakes, Get Messy!" A good gardener has made many mistakes, killed many plants, and still keeps at it. ~*Jessica Cloninger*

Keep trying if you do not succeed the first time because gardening is a great mental relaxation and a very rewarding experience. ~*James E. Klett*

Don't give up if a plant doesn't do well. Oftentimes people blame themselves when it could be something outside their control. Plants get sick like people. ~*Dr. Mark Yelanich*

Experiment and never give up. There is so much to learn in this great big horticulture world. ~*Pam Bennett*

Just keep trying! As a professional, I've likely killed more plants than you will ever even grow! It is always disheartening when something goes wrong, but it's an excellent opportunity to learn., I try to search out the solutions to prevent the issue in the future. It's also ok to be realistic. I am an excellent horticulturist who can grow an incredible range of plants, but I cannot make an orchid rebloom. I treat orchids the same as I would a cut-flower bouquet; when it's done blooming, it goes into the compost!~ *Jessie Liebeguth*

Select the right place and habitat for your plants. Be sure to plant sun-loving plants in the sun and shade-loving plants in the shade. This is often overlooked and is vitally important. ~Sarah Barbour

Always look and plant AAS winners to grow in your garden, they are trialed for great garden performance. ~Patty Buskirk

Make sure the plant you chose has room to spread out. ~Shelly Prescott

Do not be afraid to try something weird or unusual. ~Ryan Doughty & Denise Mullins

Continually explore new varieties of all plants and new ways of growing them. As weather, climate, disease, and insects change, finding plants that survive and thrive is key. ~Brian Minter

Keep trying different ways, new methods, and new varieties. There are a thousand ways to do the same thing, find what suits your style of growing and your growing conditions. ~Alex Augustyniak

Don't overwater! ~ Denise Schreiber

If it wilts, it "probably" needs water

If you are watering something in a container, pick the container up to feel how much water you're putting in the pot; don't trust your eyes. ~Rose Oberholtzer

Learn proper watering methods & how to use them to encourage a vigorous root system better able to handle stress. Don't underestimate the importance of watering methods, they can be oversimplified & overlooked. ~Kelly Dunn

Summary:

1. Know your location/environment
2. Identify what you want
3. Start small
4. Learn from Mother Nature and yourself
5. Have fun & enjoy!

Thank you!

Many articles here from the NGB Expert Members

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