

17 Gardening Tips for Seniors to Create the Perfect Backyard Oasis



Ah, retirement! The golden years when you finally have time to turn that neglected backyard into your own slice of paradise. But before you start, remember that gardening is supposed to be fun! Whether you're a seasoned green thumb or a novice nurturing your first petunia, these 17 gardening tips are your secret sauce to creating the perfect backyard oasis.

1. Ergonomic Tools



One of the best investments you can make as a gardener is to go for ergonomic tools. They help you create the garden of your dreams with style and far less pain! Look for tools with padded handles and easy-to-use mechanisms that don't require a wrestling match to operate. They're great for your back and knees!

2. Raised Beds



Why stoop when you can stand? Raised beds not only save your spine but also provide excellent drainage for your plants. Plus, they're like a buffet for your plants by giving them the best soil conditions on a silver platter. Throw in the fact that these elevated wonders are a fortress against those ground-creeping critters, and you've got yourself a win-win situation!

3. Drip Irrigation



Forget about standing with a hose – drip irrigation delivers water directly to your plants' roots. It's efficient, conserves water, and gives you more time to enjoy your garden instead of tending to it. Why wouldn't you like it? Just imagine sipping lemonade on your porch while your garden hydrates itself – that's the good life.

4. Mulch



Mulch isn't just pretty – it's a garden's secret armor against weeds. A nice, thick layer keeps those pesky plant invaders at bay and retains moisture. Plus, it makes your garden beds look tidy and well-dressed. It's also a mini spa for your soil that keeps it cool and cozy during those scorching summer days.

5. Perennials



Perennials are the gift that keeps on giving, year after year. They're like the reliable old friends you can count on to brighten your garden with minimal fuss. Choose varieties that thrive in your climate for an effortless splash of color. And, let's be honest, seeing them come back is pretty darn rewarding!

6. Container Gardening



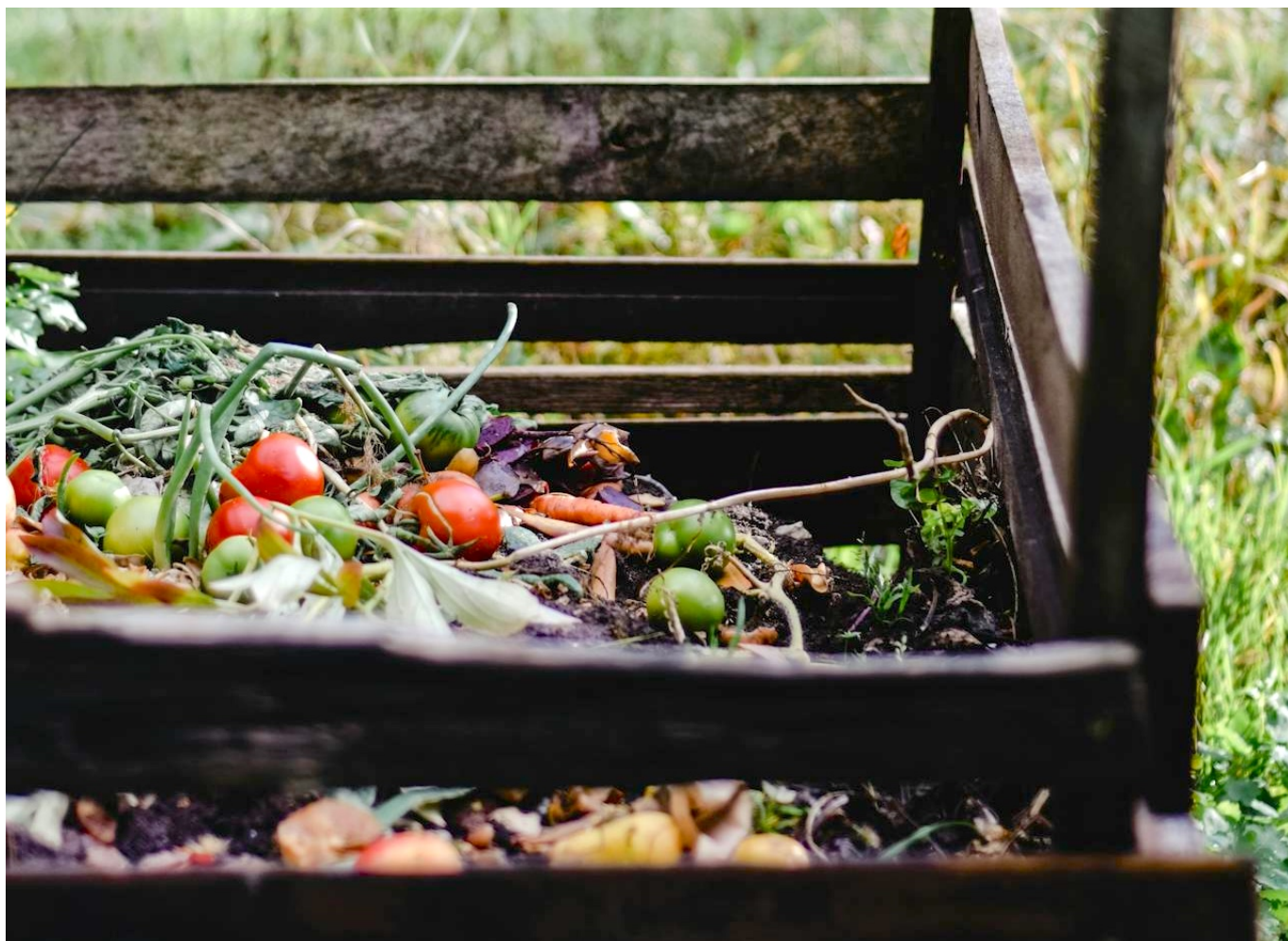
No space? No problem! Containers are the ultimate gardening tool because they'll give you both flexibility and creativity. They're also easier to manage and can be moved to suit your whims or the sun's mood swings. If you deck out your patio with pots of all sizes, then you'll have yourself a movable feast of greenery!

7. Native Plants



Sticking to native plants in your garden ensures that you're working with flora that naturally excels in your environment. These plants have acclimated to local weather patterns and soil types, demanding less water and work from you. Why wouldn't you want to make things much simpler?

8. Mastering Composting



Master the art of composting and watch as your kitchen scraps and yard waste morph into a nutrient-packed feast for your plants. Yes, it reduces waste, but it also empowers your garden to flourish. It's almost magical, turning everyday leftovers into a valuable resource to help your plants grow.

9. Growing Easy Vegetables



You should always go for vegetables that promise ease and abundance. Favorites like tomatoes, lettuce, and radishes don't ask for much, yet you can always be sure of their rewards. There's nothing better than seeing your vegetables go from garden to table in no time at all. It's the best way to celebrate the pure taste of home-grown freshness.

10. Mobility Aids



Garden scooters, kneelers, and rolling benches completely change how we engage with our gardens. These innovative tools will banish post-gardening soreness, meaning you can nurture your green spaces without discomfort. This way, every moment you spend in your garden is one of joy rather than of recovery.

11. Automatic Garden Care



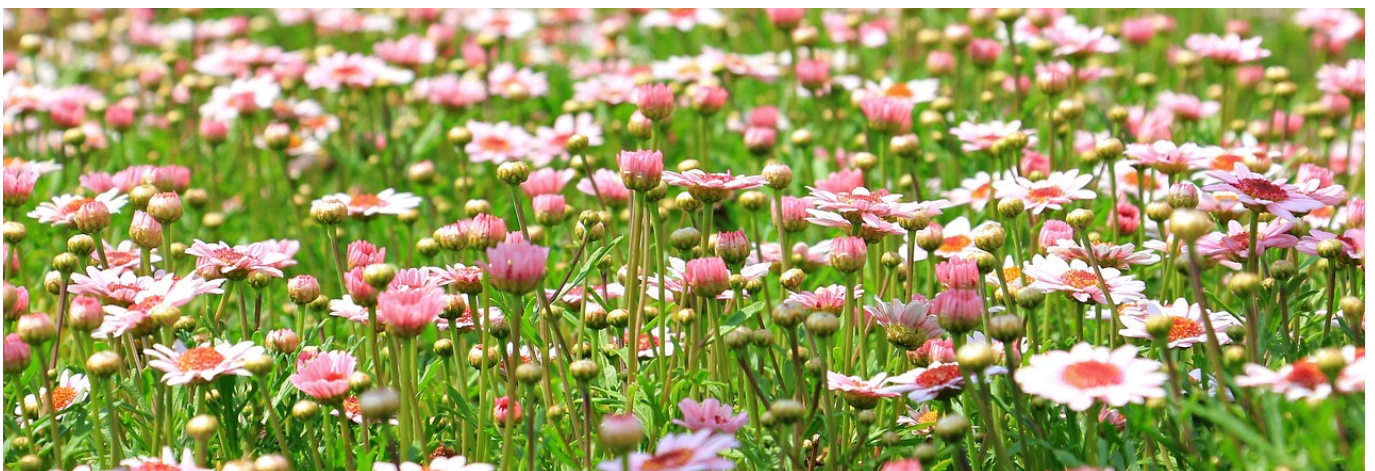
Imagine a garden that tends to itself. Sounds like a dream, right? Timers, solar-powered lights, and robotic lawnmowers work together to keep your garden thriving with a minimal amount of work. You'll be able to soak in the pleasure of your outdoor sanctuary or explore new hobbies, all while your garden flourishes by itself!

12. Welcoming Wildlife



Transform your garden into a community center for birds, bees, and butterflies. If you use bird feeders and plenty of water sources, you'll help to create a living sanctuary that'll support the ecosystem. It'll also bring the thrill of wildlife observation to your doorstep. Make the beauty of nature part of your daily life!

13. A Year-Round Garden Parade



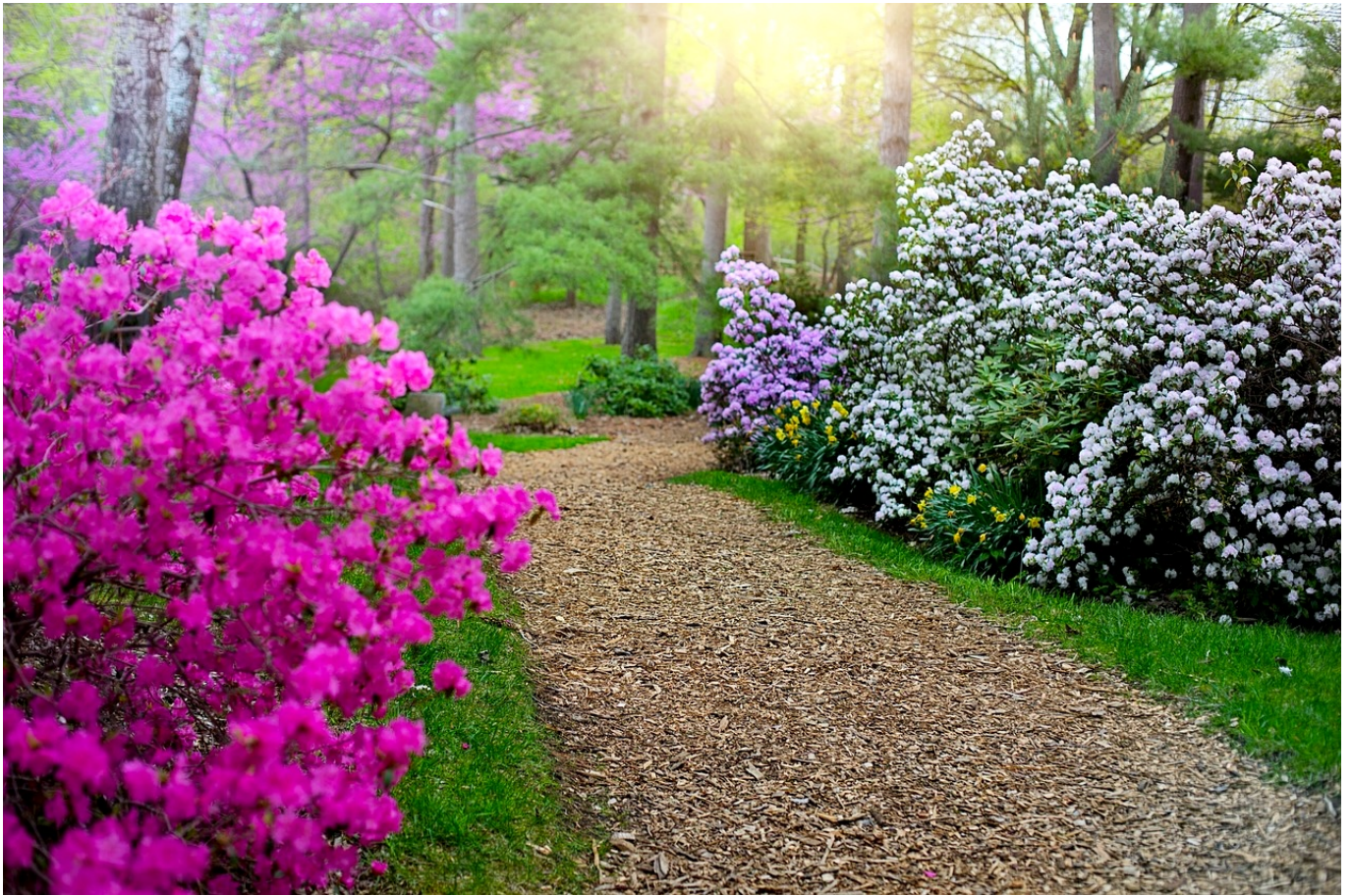
Just imagine a garden that looks beautiful in every season. Choosing plants that shine at different times of the year means you'll have an endless display of color and life. Planning carefully like this will mean your garden continually evolves, giving you a fresh face with each passing season.

14. Low-Maintenance Greenery



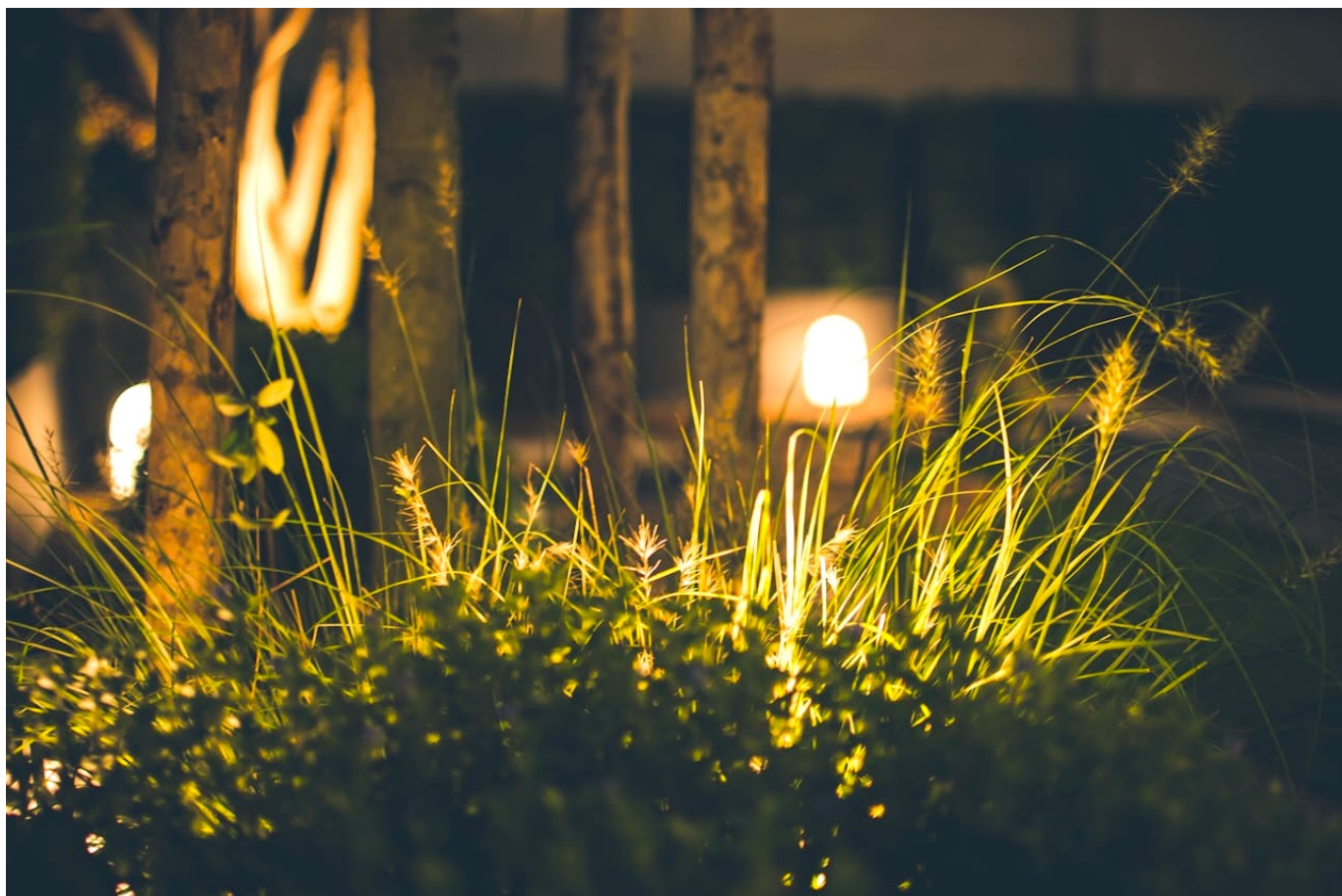
You should definitely go for low-maintenance plants like shrubs, and ground covers that flourish on their own. These will transform your garden into a green heaven that doesn't require constant care. You'll be able to enjoy nature in all its wonder without the need for constant upkeep!

15. Enchanting Pathway



Design paths in your garden that lead to adventures. Whether you're laying down whimsical wood chips or sophisticated flagstones, each path tells a story through your garden. Pathways become the center of your yard, telling tales of flora and inviting visitors to uncover its secrets step by step.

16. Garden of Lights



When twilight descends, your garden will truly come alive, all thanks to how you use the lighting. Go for lights that truly brighten up your pathways and accent your favorite features. This way, you can create an oasis of calm for evening escapism. These lights will turn every evening into an opportunity to experience your garden in a new, mystical light.

17. Gardening Clubs



One of the best things you can do is to join a gardening club. Being alongside all these other green-thumbed individuals, every conversation will give you seeds of knowledge and friendship. It's here where garden dreams and personal aspirations come together, watered by collective passion and blooming into something truly magnificent.

Smart Choices



Transforming your backyard into an oasis doesn't need a magic wand or a youth potion. It's all about smart choices, from ergonomic tools that won't leave you sore to choosing plants that pretty much take care of themselves. If you follow these 17 tips, you'll create a vibrant, thriving garden for everyone!

Cheap and Economical Humidity Dome Alternatives



If you grow your plants from seeds then you probably know what a humidity dome is. (If not, don't worry, we'll go over it briefly below.) Just like with all of your other gardening supplies, you can buy humidity domes from a variety of different sources. However, you can also DIY them. Here are some cheap and economical humidity dome alternatives.

What Is a Humidity Dome?

A humidity dome sounds like really fancy device, doesn't it? [Bootstrap Farmer](#) says that they're an important part of your seed starting tool kit. But what are they? Basically, they're just plastic lids for your seed trays. Very important, very helpful, but not necessarily fancy at all.

Why Use a Humidity Dome For Seed Starting?

Humidity domes help retain moisture in the soil. Instead of evaporating into the air, the plastic lid catches the moisture

and keeps it there with the seeds. Additionally, the lid helps maintain an even temperature for the seeds in the tray. Benefits of using a humidity dome include:

- Less time spent watering
- Less time spent checking and maintaining temperature
- Improved germination rates
- Faster germination
- Protection for delicate, expensive, favorite seeds

Are they necessary? Some say yes, some say no. But as long as you can find cheap and economical humidity dome alternatives then there's really no harm in at least seeing if they improve your seed growing process.

Cheap and Economical Humidity Dome Alternatives

So, you can obviously shop around and purchase a variety of humidity domes for your gardening. And you can purchase seed trays that come with their own domes. But you can also come up with your own cheap and economical humidity dome alternatives. For example, alternatives offered in a [National Gardening Association](#) forum and over on the [Green Upside](#) website include:

Living Lettuce Containers

Obviously, these are already designed to grow plants – you buy them with lettuce growing inside. When you're done with the lettuce, use the container. It's roomy, about the same width as height, and it's a great option for starting your seeds in at home.

Plastic Wrap

Green Upside explains that you can use plastic wrap around an

egg carton seed starting tray or almost any other container to create the humidity dome.

Plastic Bag

Alternatively, you can use a plastic bag the same way. Specifically, Green Upside notes that you can use a wet paper towel inside of a plastic bag to start your seeds ... no other containers needed!

Ready-To-Eat Chicken Containers

You know those chickens that you buy whole, ready to eat, from Costco or the supermarket? They usually come on a plastic tray with a plastic dome over it. If you're a gardener, you might look at that container and think, "that would be perfect for my garden." If you have plants that need room for leaves to grow, these can be great humidity dome alternatives.

Plastic Bottle

Cut the bottom out of a large plastic bottle, such as a gallon milk bottle. Use that as your humidity dome over your seed tray.

Plastic Containers for Berries

These are an interesting choice. They're shallow, so you have to choose what you're growing in there carefully. Moreover, they're vented with air holes. Sometimes this is a good thing and sometimes it defeats the purpose of your humidity dome. Sometimes too much humidity leads to mold so the venting is good. It depends on varied factors. So, consider this as a potential option but maybe not the best one.

Old Food Containers

Do you have a bunch of food containers that you keep to store

your leftovers? Do you have too many of them? Green Upside suggests using any food container with a lid to create your seed tray with its own humidity dome.

In other words, look around for plastic that you can recycle/upcycle to create a humidity home!

Read More:

- [5 Cheap Substitutes for Seedling Trays](#)
- [10 Techniques To Increase Germination Rate of Seeds](#)
- [Seed Starting on a Budget: DIY Containers](#)

DIY Squash Trellis Under \$10



Growing squash is a great idea. There are many great squash varieties to feed your family. However, you want to plan ahead when growing squash. If you don't, then this plant can take over your entire garden. In particular, you'll want to train your squash to grow on a trellis. Here are some great ideas for how to make a DIY squash trellis under \$10.

Why You Need a Squash Trellis

[Rural Sprout](#) explains that squash will absolutely overrun a garden if you plant this vegetable without a trellis. Like an octopus, they'll reach their tentacles all over the place. This can wreak havoc on your other plants. Therefore, you want to use a squash trellis. You can train the squash to grow up a vertical trellis. According to Rural Sprout, the benefits of vertical gardening for squash plants include:

- Saves space, allowing for more squash growth while retaining space to grow other plants
- Keeps squash fruit off of the ground, improving the fruit and the plants as a whole (yes, squash is a fruit)
- It's easier to harvest squash grown vertically on a trellis
- The vertical design gives you opportunities for enhancing your garden's aesthetic design

Squash To Grow on a Trellis

There are many different types of squash that you can grow in your backyard garden. [Gardening Know How](#) says that some of the best squash for vertical gardening include acorn squash, delicata, yellow summer squash and zucchini. You can grow other squash vertically but the heavier varieties will require stronger trellis reinforcement.

How to DIY Squash Trellis Under \$10

You can purchase a squash trellis. However, frugal gardeners can easily make a DIY squash trellis under \$10. Here are some great examples of how to do so:

Put some basic woodworking skills to the test to create this DIY Squash Trellis under \$10. As you can see, you'll make some simple cuts in your wood. You'll actually use 10 1x2x96 furring strips, which cost less than \$1 each at most home improvement stores. Assemble the smaller and larger pieces as shown in the video, propping them up together to create the squash trellis. As long as you already have the saw and drill, this is a very affordable project.HJ

Here's another great example of how to DIY a squash trellis. In this example, you buy 5' stakes designed for growing tomatoes and other plants. You attach them to the planter at

an angle so that the squash (or in this example, the cucumbers) can grow upwards at that angle. Then you build out the frame to create a fuller trellis. You add wires horizontally within the frame. The vine tendrils from your squash will climb those wires. This is another super simple project under \$10.

Tips For Growing Squash

Here are some additional tips for vertical squash gardening:

- You can adapt these DIY ideas to any wood or fencing that you already have at home. It's great to repurpose those items.
- Secure your vertical trellis posts deep in the ground. You want the bottom of the trellis to be able to bear a lot of vertical weight as the squash plants grow.
- Make sure that your plants get plenty of sunlight.
- Train the plants to grow where you want them to by guiding the vines onto the trellis wires as they grow.
- For heavier squash plants, either grow them on the ground or add slings to support the squash as they grow. Otherwise they can break off at the stems. Watch as they grow in size to get a sense of whether or not you'll need this additional support.

Read More:

- [5 Winter Squash Varieties for the Frugal Gardener Short on Space](#)
 - [7 Plants You Can Direct Seed](#)
 - [Is It Worth It To Grow Your Own Pumpkins?](#)
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4 Frugal DIY Drip Irrigation Systems



Buying a fancy drip irrigation system is one way to go. But it'll cost you. Instead, consider a DIY drip irrigation system. Either way, you'll need to spend time installing

irrigation, so why not save a few bucks, too?

Benefits of drip irrigation

You've got a hose or a sprinkler, so why invest time and effort into building a DIY drip irrigation system?

Here are the advantages of this type of watering system:

- **Less water waste.** Water doesn't evaporate as readily with a drip irrigation system.
- **Targeted watering.** Because the tubing is close to plant roots, water gets right to where it needs to go—which means less waste and higher efficiency watering.
- **Less disease spread.** With drip irrigation, water is unlikely to splash onto plant foliage. That means fewer chances for contaminated soil to spread pathogens.
- **Easy watering.** Once installed, an irrigation system makes watering incredibly easy. No more lugging around a heavy hose. You can even install a timer and have the system work completely on its own.
- **Fewer weeds.** Because water goes right to plant roots, weeds are less likely to grow between plants.

DIY drip irrigation systems

You'll need to spend a bit of money on materials to build your DIY drip irrigation system, but the initial cost is worth it, considering how much time you'll save down the line.

Here are some ideas for creating DIY drip irrigation systems:

- **PVC pipes:** Modern Farmer has a great [step-by-step tutorial](#) for creating this kind of drip system.
- **Soda bottles:** This is an easy drip irrigation system for the frugal gardener that costs next to nothing. It's a

great option for small space gardeners. Here's a video on how to use soda bottles to create a cheap drip irrigation system:

- **Rain barrel system:** Here's a video that shows you how to use a rain barrel in a drip irrigation system to minimize water waste:
- **Bucket:** Got a bucket? You're in luck! You can build a simple DIY drip irrigation system easily. This video shows how you can pair drip tape or tubing with buckets to create a low-tech irrigation system that doesn't require a hookup to a nearby water source:

This setup is even simpler:

Seeding Square Review: An Essential Tool for the Square Foot Gardener



In this review, I'll explain how the seeding square makes organized planting a cinch!

The Square Foot Gardening method has been my go-to since I began gardening. I love it for many reasons. It allows me to maximize my planting space and close spacing keeps weed growth to a minimum. My favorite aspect, though, is how organized everything looks. I love that each [square foot](#) has a purpose. The spacing requirements make it easy to spot weeds and thinning seedlings is a piece of cake.

However, even with a grid it can be tough to accurately eyeball spacing—especially for crops like carrots and [radishes](#), whose spacing is 16 per square foot. My self-made holes aren't always perfectly aligned, and I often get the planting depth wrong. And when I opt to use the SFG method in beds without grids, I often forget where I've started sowing.

How Does it Work?



The Seeding Square is an attempt to make the Square Foot Gardening method even easier. Sure, a stick works wonders in a pinch, but having perfectly spaced holes really makes a difference.

The gardening tool ships in a square-shaped box. The square itself is slightly raised with a hollow back end to allow for indentations in the soil. As you stamp the square into the earth, it creates a makeshift grid.

The Seeding Square includes a small plastic dibbler with seed depth indicators. On the other side of the wand is a spoon-shaped end for scooping up seeds. The third funnel piece, which clicks to the unit for storage, helps direct [seeds](#) into their respective holes.

The Seeding Square itself is full of color-coded holes to help guide your planting. If you're planting carrot seeds, for instance, you can use the wand to poke 16 holes through the red-colored circles. The color-coding concept is a fantastic teaching tool for introducing newcomers to the SFG method. It's also a great way to involve kids in gardening. If you're totally new to gardening, don't worry because the package

includes planting guides to help gardeners get started. You can also [download](#) them online.

My Thoughts on the Seeding Square

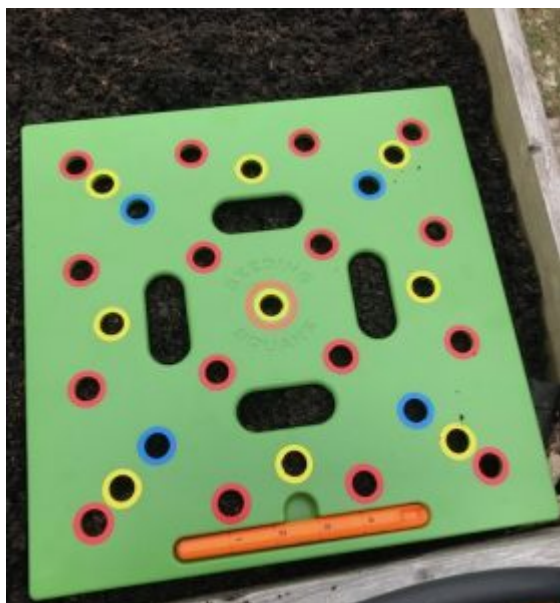
Last week, the soil finally warmed, and I was ready to start sowing cool-weather plants like spinach and bok choy. It was the perfect time to put the Seeding Square to the test.



First off, I'll say that I was incredibly impressed with the construction of the gardening accessory. It's super sturdy, and I wasn't afraid to press it firmly into the soil. I imagine it'll hold up for a long while. ***(update: 1 year later and it's still going strong!)***

Part of my garden features semi-permanent wooden grids, which is where I first began my planting with the Seeding Square. It's a bit tough to use the square atop a grid, but if my beds were completely filled, I suspect it would be easier. I still was able to poke the holes I needed and finished with planting in no time at all.

The Seeding Square really made my life easier in the no-grid portion of my garden. A quick press into the soil and my faux-grid was complete. I expect perfect squares of seedlings to



pop up any day now!

I didn't end up using the spoon end of the wand nor did I find myself choosing to use the funnel, but they're helpful add-ons that others may find useful. There's also little chance of losing the wand because it magnetizes to the square.

The square itself is super easy to clean, too. A quick rinse under the tap and it looked good as new.

An Inexpensive Tool for Frugal Gardeners

I look forward to using the Seeding Square throughout the season and beyond. It's a well thought out tool that's built-to-last, and it works exactly as intended. I even left my first planting day of the season without dirt under my fingernails!

What I'm about to type is a bit of blasphemy in the world of SFG, but the Seeding Square has me thinking that I may not

replace my grids once they eventual



Why do I recommend this product to frugal gardeners? It's a small investment that will last you a long time. It's also a great entry tool for those interested in Square Foot Gardening. I'm a big believer that organization in the garden leads to pennies saved.

Check out the [Seeding Square](#) website for more info. The product may also be purchased on [Amazon](#).

Disclaimer: I was graciously gifted a seeding square in exchange for an honest review.

4 Smart Garden Devices That Save Time and Money



Manual work in the garden is sometimes gratifying, but over time the grind becomes tedious. Thankfully, there are a host of smart gardening products out there that can help save you

time and money. Which smart garden devices are worth the investment?

Here are my top 4 smart gadget recommendations for gardeners seeking to save time and spend less money on their edible plots.

Instapark Outdoor Automatic Watering Timer

I recently purchased and installed an automatic watering timer to [water](#) my front yard flower patch. This section of my garden sits under my home's roof overhang so it rarely receives any natural water and my regular hose doesn't reach that far, so it's a pain to water manually. I got some cheap irrigation hoses and connected them to this digital timer (both the hoses and timer cost under \$50) and now this perma-dry spot gets watered on a regular basis. There's a neat option to skip watering days (in case of rain), which I make sure to do so as not to waste water. The whole set up was inexpensive and it saves me loads of time in the long run. Last year, I relied on rainwater to wet this area and I lost quite a few plants, which I had spent time and money starting from seed.

Flexi Hose Expandable Garden Hose

I don't quite know what I was doing before I had this kind of hose. Now, watering is such a breeze it barely feels like a chore. Lugging around a heavy, clunky hose that's hard to put away? That's far from ideal. I'd sometimes skip watering because I hated to untangle the easily kinked hose. A flexible, expandable hose has its own challenges—it's a fair bit more delicate than a heavy-duty hose—but it's always easy to carry throughout the garden and it's a delight to put away since it shrinks down to size once drained. Just be sure to store it away for the winter to prevent the casing from cracking. While this isn't technically a smart device, I think

the design is clever enough to qualify. It has saved me time and money because it makes watering a lot easier and I haven't neglected my watering duties since getting this type of hose.

AcuRite Wireless Rain Gauge

When it comes to gardening, I rely on the weather forecast a lot. No matter how diligent I am in checking the weekly weather predictions, I can't accurately measure the amount of rain my garden gets without the help of a gadget. A plain rain gauge does the trick, but if you like smart technology, this nifty wireless device is a handy monitoring tool. It's a self-emptying collector that's useful for checking how much rainwater your garden is getting. It's also an excellent device for people in flood-prone areas. And it costs under \$50!

Click and Grow Indoor Smart Garden

This intelligent garden system is on the higher end of the price scale, but it's well worth the investment. I've grown so many herbs in this little automated garden that I never buy them at the grocery store anymore. The hydroponic unit makes it possible to grow [greens](#), herbs, and other plants indoors all year round. All you need to do is add water and harvest away!