

Frugal Garden Ideas from Italian Renaissance Gardens



Recently I've been sharing with you some of the [garden designs](#) that I would like to learn more about. This week, I want to talk a bit about Italian Renaissance Gardens. I've researched a little bit of their history and their design style. Additionally, I have thought about ways to incorporate elements of that design style into any garden on a frugal budget.

History of Italian Renaissance Gardens

During the Italian Renaissance, gardens underwent a profound transformation influenced by humanist ideals and a revived interest in the classical world. This period, spanning roughly from the 14th to the 17th century, marked a significant shift in garden design and landscaping principles.

Humanism and Garden Philosophy

Humanism, a cultural movement that celebrated human potential and knowledge, greatly influenced the design ethos of Renaissance gardens. Gardens became extensions of the household, reflecting the owner's status, wealth, and appreciation for aesthetics.

Evolution from Medieval Gardens

Italian Renaissance gardens departed from the enclosed, utilitarian spaces of medieval times. They embraced open spaces, symmetry, and a sense of unity between architecture, nature, and art.

Influences from Antiquity

The revival of classical antiquity played a pivotal role in shaping these gardens. Artists and architects drew inspiration from Roman and Greek texts, sculptures, and architecture, incorporating elements like statues, columns, and axial designs.

3 Key Garden Types in Italian Renaissance Gardens

[Italian Renaissance gardens](#) encompassed various types, each serving distinct purposes and reflecting different aspects of life and culture during that time. Three common types were:

1. Villa Gardens

Affluent families, nobles, or patrons of the arts owned these types of gardens. As a result, the garden design complemented the elegance and leisure associated with these estates. They served as spaces for entertainment, relaxation, and the display of wealth.

Often expansive, villa gardens featured intricate layouts with geometric designs, water features like fountains or pools, statuary, shaded walkways, and areas for outdoor gatherings and performances. Symmetry and axial planning were prevalent, with meticulously planned vistas leading the eye to focal points such as statues or architectural elements.

2. Sacred or Monastic Gardens

Within the confines of monasteries or religious institutions, sacred gardens were cultivated for practical and spiritual purposes. These gardens combined horticulture with symbolism and were often used for medicinal herbs and contemplation.

Sacred gardens were spaces for monks or nuns to cultivate medicinal plants, reflecting a connection between spirituality and nature. They served as places for quiet contemplation and prayer. These gardens were known for their diverse array of plants, often emphasizing medicinal herbs and plants mentioned in ancient texts.

3. Urban or Courtyard Gardens

Smaller in scale, urban gardens were found within city dwellings or smaller residences. Despite their size, they encapsulated the Renaissance spirit in miniature, showcasing artistic elements and providing a retreat within bustling urban settings.

Urban gardens featured fountains, sculptures, ornamental plantings, and sometimes small arbors or trellises. They aimed to create a serene and beautiful space within limited confines. Often used for leisure, contemplation, or as extensions of the household, these gardens were places of respite within the cityscape.

Common Italian Renaissance Garden Design Features

Although there were different styles of Italian Renaissance Gardens, they shared many design features including:

Symmetry and Axial Layouts

Italian Renaissance Gardens were often laid out in symmetrical patterns, creating a sense of balance and harmony. Symmetry was achieved through carefully aligned pathways, planting beds, and architectural elements. Gardens were often structured along a central axis, providing a clear view from one end to the other. This axial arrangement drew the eye toward focal points like statues, fountains, or architectural features.

Water Features

Water played a symbolic and practical role. Elaborate fountains, reflecting pools, and water channels were integral. Water symbolized purity and life, and its presence added visual appeal and a soothing ambiance.

Sculptures and Architectural Ornaments:

Marble statues and sculptural elements, inspired by ancient Greek and Roman art, adorned the gardens. These sculptures often depicted mythological figures or renowned personalities. Gardens incorporated architectural features such as columns, pavilions, or arches, adding a sense of grandeur and creating focal points within the landscape.

Diverse Greenery

Renaissance gardens showcased a rich variety of plants. They have fragrant herbs like rosemary, lavender, and thyme for

both their aromatic qualities and medicinal uses. They also have fruit-bearing trees such as citrus, figs, and pomegranates to add color and provide fresh produce. Vibrant flowers like roses, lilies, irises, and tulips were arranged in geometric beds, contributing to the gardens' visual splendor and symbolizing beauty and refinement.

Terracing and Perspective:

In some instances, these gardens incorporate terraces and multiple levels. These terraces enhanced views and incorporated the surrounding scenery into the garden's design, providing perspectives from various levels.

Tips for Frugal Ideas for Incorporating Features of Italian Renaissance Gardens

Want to recreate some of the opulence of Italian Renaissance Gardens on a smaller budget? Here are some ideas:

- **Symmetry and Axial Layouts:** Use ropes, stakes, or string to plan and create symmetrical pathways or planting beds without expensive materials or tools.
- **DIY Water Features:** Repurpose containers or use affordable pre-formed liners to create small-scale water features like birdbaths or miniature fountains.
- **Sculptures and Ornaments:** Utilize thrift stores, DIY techniques, or recycled materials to craft sculptures or ornaments resembling classical statues for an artistic touch.
- **Greenery and Plantings:** Choose budget-friendly yet visually appealing plants like perennial flowers, herbs, or fast-growing shrubs from local nurseries or seed swaps.
- **Terracing Illusion:** Create the illusion of terraces with

strategic plantings or raised beds, giving a multi-level appearance without actual construction.

- **Reflective Surfaces on a Budget:** Install inexpensive mirrors or mirrored tiles strategically to mimic the reflective surfaces found in Renaissance gardens.
- **Architectural Elegance with Budget Materials:** Use affordable materials such as bamboo, wood, or PVC pipes to create arches, pergolas, or trellises.
- **Classical-inspired Elements:** Repurpose old columns, pillars, or architectural salvages as focal points or decorative elements in the garden design.
- **Simple Geometric Plantings:** Arrange low-cost annual flowers or inexpensive perennials in geometric patterns or beds to evoke the geometric planting style of Renaissance gardens.
- **Fruit Trees and Fragrant Herbs:** Incorporate budget-friendly fruit trees or aromatic herbs like rosemary and lavender in your garden for both visual appeal and functionality.

Read More:

- [Frugal Inspiration from Mughal Gardens](#)
- [Zen Gardens on a Budget](#)
- [Greek Gardening Style on the Cheap](#)

Frugal Inspiration from Mughal Gardens



Recently I shared with you that there are [many different garden designs](#) I want to learn more about. One of these designs is from Mughal gardens. These historic Indian gardens are known for their symmetrical design, use of geometric patterns, water features like pools and fountains, and lush greenery. So, I decided to do a little bit more research into these gardens. I learned a little bit about their history and their design. Moreover, I learned how to derive some frugal inspiration for adding features of this style to any garden. Today, I want to share with you what I learned.

History of Mughal Gardens

We can trace the [roots of Mughal gardens](#) back to Central Asia and Persia. There we find the concept of paradise gardens. Paradise gardens refer to enclosed, lush spaces with meticulously planned layouts. Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, introduced these garden traditions to the Indian subcontinent when he established his rule in the early 16th century.

However, it was during the reign of Babur's grandson, Emperor Akbar, that Mughal gardens flourished and evolved into distinct forms. Akbar, known for his appreciation of art, culture, and architecture, commissioned several gardens, including the famous Garden of the Fateful, which blended Persian and Indian design elements. These gardens were aesthetically pleasing. More than that, though, they served as venues for imperial gatherings, relaxation, and contemplation.

Emperor Jahangir, Akbar's son and successor, further developed the Mughal garden style. He had a profound love for nature and commissioned several gardens that incorporated a diverse array of flora, water features, and pavilions. The Shalimar Bagh in Srinagar and the Nishat Bagh in Kashmir are notable examples of his reign.

The zenith of Mughal garden design is often associated with Emperor Shah Jahan, who is renowned for constructing the Taj Mahal. The gardens surrounding the Taj Mahal itself reflect the pinnacle of Mughal garden architecture, featuring a symmetrical layout, reflecting pools, fountains, and meticulously planned green spaces.

Design Features of Mughal Gardens

[Mughal gardens](#) stand as a testament to the ingenuity and artistic vision of an empire that sought to create earthly paradises. Their symmetrical layouts, water features, lush greenery, and architectural elements continue to awe and inspire, serving as a timeless testament to a glorious era of architectural and horticultural splendor. Here's a closer look at these design features:

Symmetry and Geometric Precision

At the heart of Mughal garden design lies a profound emphasis on symmetry and geometric precision. These gardens are meticulously laid out in perfect symmetrical patterns. They

are often divided into quadrants or sections using pathways, water channels, or rows of trees. The precise alignment of pathways, water features, and planting beds reflects a deliberate pursuit of balance and harmony.

Charbagh Layout

The hallmark layout of Mughal gardens is the Charbagh, which translates to “four gardens.” This is a quadrilateral design which is divided into four parts. These four parts symbolize the four rivers of paradise in Islamic tradition. Each section is further subdivided into smaller squares or rectangles, creating a series of interconnected gardens within the larger scheme.

Water Features and Aqueducts

Water plays a central role in Mughal gardens. It symbolizes life, purity, and paradise. These gardens incorporate elaborate water features such as cascading fountains, reflecting pools, channels, and canals. These features not only add to the aesthetic appeal but also serve practical purposes of irrigation and cooling the surroundings. The presence of flowing water and reflective pools amplifies the serene ambiance of these spaces.

Pavilions and Architectural Elements

Strategically placed pavilions, known as ‘baradaris’ or ‘chhatris,’ dot the landscape of Mughal gardens. These pavilions serve as vantage points for enjoying the garden’s beauty and as retreats from the sun, providing shade and a place for leisure and contemplation. The architecture of these pavilions often exhibits intricate details, including ornate carvings and elaborate domes, showcasing the empire’s skilled craftsmanship.

Tilework: Mosaic Patterns

Mughal tilework often involves the creation of mosaic patterns using tiles made from glazed ceramic. These typically feature vibrant hues of blue, green, yellow, and turquoise. These mosaics were meticulously arranged to form intricate designs that captivated the eye and added a sense of grandeur to the garden architecture.

Flora and Landscaping

The lush greenery within Mughal gardens encompasses a meticulously curated selection of plants, including fragrant flowers, fruit-bearing trees, cypress, jasmine, and roses, among others. Designers plant the flora meticulously to create a harmonious blend of colors, textures, and scents, enhancing the sensory experience of visitors.

Integration with Surrounding Landscape

Mughal gardens do not exist as isolated entities; rather, they integrate seamlessly with the natural landscape. The gardens often make use of natural slopes and terrain, creating terraced levels that add depth and visual interest. The garden design often incorporates the surrounding vistas, whether mountains, rivers, or forests.

Terraces

Terracing is a significant feature in Mughal gardens, particularly in landscapes with varying elevations. These gardens often existed on sloping terrain. As a result, designers constructed terraces to create flat, leveled platforms for planting beds, pathways, and water channels.

Tips for Adding Elements of Mughal Design Frugally to Any Garden

- **Symmetry Matters:** Opt for simple, straight-edged

pathways. You might even use strings and stakes to plan symmetrical planting layouts without expensive tools or materials.

- **Water Features on a Budget:** Repurpose containers or use affordable pre-formed liners to create small-scale water features like birdbaths or miniature fountains.
- **Tile Accents:** Utilize broken tiles or inexpensive mosaic kits to adorn small areas like garden pots or stepping stones with colorful mosaic patterns.
- **Pavilion or Seating Area:** Repurpose old furniture or use inexpensive materials like pallets to build a simple pergola or seating structure.
- **Use of Plants:** Choose budget-friendly, fast-growing plants like seeds or young saplings for jasmine, roses, or fruit trees. Look for plant sales or nurseries offering discounts.
- **Geometric Planting Beds:** Use cost-effective materials like wooden planks or recycled materials to create raised beds or planters in geometric shapes.
- **Reflective Surfaces:** Repurpose old mirrors or purchase affordable mirrored tiles to create reflective surfaces strategically placed in the garden.
- **Low-Cost Lighting:** Shop for budget-friendly string lights or solar-powered lanterns, or repurpose existing outdoor lighting to create an ambient atmosphere without overspending.
- **Inexpensive Architectural Touches:** Use PVC pipes, wooden frames, or affordable materials to construct arches, trellises, or decorative elements for an architectural touch.
- **Creative Pruning:** Invest time in learning basic pruning techniques and use simple, inexpensive tools like hand pruners to shape plants into geometric or artistic forms.

What do you think; could you incorporate elements of Mughal gardens into your garden on a budget?

Read More:

- [GREEK GARDEN DESIGN](#)
 - [ENGLISH GARDEN DESIGN](#)
 - [ZEN GARDENS](#)
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Garden Designs I Want to Learn More About



I enjoy exploring different approaches to garden design. There are so many styles that evoke so many different feelings when you're amidst them. Although I know a little bit about a few styles, there are many others I hope to learn more about in the weeks, months, and years to come.

3 Garden Designs I've Shared With You

I've already shared some details about a few different types of garden designs here on this site. Take a look:

[Greek Garden Design](#)

Discover the essence of Greek garden design: stone features, Mediterranean trees and herbs, terracotta accents, and vibrant colors. Embrace rustic finds, symmetrical layouts, and recycled materials to capture the essence of Greek gardens while staying within your budget.

[English Garden Design](#)

An English garden embodies a blend of formal structure with natural, romantic elements. It includes symmetry, defined lines, and architectural features alongside a more relaxed, naturalistic layout. It embraces abundant plantings and softer transitions, often drawing inspiration from the charm of cottage gardens.

[Zen Gardens](#)

Zen gardens are characterized by their serene and minimalist design, fostering a tranquil environment through carefully arranged elements. You can use many natural elements to create them on a budget.

Garden Designs I Want to Learn More About

I like learning about historic garden design as well as contemporary design from around the world. Here are some of the different garden types that I would like to learn more

about:

Mughal Gardens

The [Mughal Gardens](#) are historic gardens found in South Asia. They are designed to provide a little bit of paradise on Earth. Features include:

- **Symmetrical Layout:** They are typically divided into four quadrants or charbagh. These quadrants are typically organized around a central water feature or pool.
- **Water Features:** In addition to the central pool, Mughal gardens include elaborate water channels, fountains, and reflecting pools.
- **Terraced Levels:** Gardens are sometimes terraced to follow the natural contours of the land, creating a sense of depth and grandeur.
- **Ornate Pavilions and Pavement:** Mughal gardens often feature pavilions or pavilions adorned with intricate carvings, marble inlays, and decorative elements.
- **Lush Vegetation:** Gardens are lush with a variety of flora, including fragrant flowers, fruit-bearing trees, and symmetrical rows of cypress or other trees. These plants provide shade, fragrance, and aesthetic appeal.
- **Intricate Tilework:** Decorative tilework is a prominent feature in Mughal gardens, adorning walls, pathways, and fountains with colorful mosaic designs and intricate patterns.

Italian Renaissance Gardens

Europe has brought us many different types of gardens throughout time. Italian Renaissance gardens emphasize grandeur, elegance, and human-made beauty. They incorporate extensive use of classical statuary, fountains, terraces, and formal plantings, displaying meticulous symmetry and refined aesthetics. The incorporation of art into nature in these gardens is one thing that really appeals to me.

Additional features include:

- **Geometry:** These gardens are known for their geometric precision. They often follow precise axes, with pathways, hedges, and flowerbeds arranged in symmetrical patterns, creating a sense of order and balance.
- **Formal Design Elements:** Italian Renaissance gardens incorporate formal design elements such as perfectly manicured hedges, geometrically shaped flowerbeds (parterres), and precisely aligned paths or walkways.
- **Water Features:** Water is used to create soothing sounds, provide visual interest, and symbolize purity and life.
- **Ornate Architectural Elements:** Gardens often include ornate pavilions, sculptures, statues, and architectural structures like pergolas or gazebos.
- **Sculpted Plantings:** Plants are often pruned and shaped meticulously to maintain a controlled and uniform appearance. This includes topiaries, shaped shrubs, and [espaliered trees](#) against walls, showcasing a refined and sculptural aspect.

French Formal Gardens

French formal gardens and Italian [Renaissance gardens](#) share similarities. For example, they both emphasize geometric layouts and formal design. They both embrace a sense of grandeur and meticulous planning. Moreover, they both incorporate ornate architectural elements within their designs.

However, they differ in their nuances: French formal gardens lean toward highly structured and manicured geometric precision, employing elaborate parterres, meticulously sculpted hedges, and axial pathways to create grand vistas. In contrast, Italian Renaissance gardens also embrace symmetry and geometric precision but often incorporate terraces, water features like fountains and reflecting pools, and a deeper integration of art, architecture, and natural landscapes,

aiming to evoke a sense of classical harmony and humanistic ideals.

While both styles exude elegance and sophistication through formal design principles, Italian Renaissance gardens often encompass a broader integration of natural and architectural elements, while French formal gardens exhibit meticulous and controlled geometrical aesthetics with precise axial arrangements. I'd like to gain even more insight into the differences between these two garden types.

California Modern & Minimalist Gardens

California modern and minimalist gardens fuse contemporary design principles with the state's outdoor lifestyle. These gardens prioritize clean lines, simplicity, and functionality while embracing the natural beauty of the Californian landscape. Key elements include:

- **Clean Design Aesthetics:** Characterized by minimalism, these gardens focus on simplicity in layout and plant selection. They incorporate geometric shapes, straight lines, and open spaces to create a sense of order and tranquility.
- **Hardscaping Elements:** Materials like concrete, metal, wood, and glass dominate the design, forming pathways, decks, seating areas, and retaining walls. These elements often showcase craftsmanship and emphasize functionality while maintaining an elegant appearance.
- **Native and Drought-Tolerant Plants:** To align with California's climate and conserve water, plant choices typically include native species or drought-resistant plants such as succulents, agaves, grasses, and other low-maintenance flora. These plants provide texture and color while requiring minimal water.
- **Emphasis on Outdoor Living:** California modern gardens often blur the line between indoor and outdoor spaces, creating seamless transitions. They feature outdoor

kitchens, lounge areas, fire pits, and built-in seating, encouraging outdoor living and entertainment.

- **Sustainable Features:** Sustainable practices are integral. Gardens may incorporate environmentally friendly elements such as permeable paving, rainwater harvesting systems, and efficient irrigation techniques to conserve water and reduce environmental impact.
- **Integration of Art and Sculpture:** Sculptural elements, art installations, and strategically placed focal points enhance the garden's visual appeal, adding artistic flair and creating points of interest within the minimalist landscape.
- **Maintenance and Functionality:** These gardens prioritize functionality and ease of maintenance. Plantings are often strategically placed to reduce upkeep, and the overall design aims for simplicity and practicality in its upkeep.

What's your favorite garden design? Share in the comments!

Sometimes It's Nice to Visit Someone Else's Garden



This past week, my partner and I stayed at an Airbnb with a beautiful backyard garden. We chose it because it was dog friendly and our dogs were the entire reason that we were going there. But, of course, the garden itself was a nice added bonus. And I realized while I was there that sometimes it's really nice to enjoy someone else's garden rather than sitting in your own.

Why We Took Our Airbnb Garden Trip

My pup just had CCL surgery, which means that she is on sedatives and not supposed to walk around. Her full recovery time is about ten weeks. However, those first days are, of course the toughest ones. We live in an apartment up two flights of stairs, and neither one of us wanted to deal with the headache and hassle of taking her up those stairs immediately after surgery. Instead, we wanted a place to stay where she could easily walk out the door into a yard and do

her business and go right back in, no stars necessary. That's why we got an Airbnb for a few days.

We chose the Airbnb because it was a home that didn't just say "dogs allowed" but actually really welcomed dogs. There's a difference. Especially when you have two dogs and the smaller one is 80 pounds. The one who had surgery is 108 pounds. If you were wondering why we weren't ready to carry her upstairs, that probably explains it. We communicated with the homeowners in advance and throughout the stay. They were generous with their space and great about our dogs. It was a wonderful experience.

We stayed in a small studio guesthouse without a real kitchen which ended up just perfect because there wasn't a lot of space for the dog to try to move around while she was supposed to be resting. There was a regular door as well as a double sliding door. That was perfect. With the cone of shame on her head, she could still walk easily through the door, off onto the porch, get some fresh air and do her business.



Dogs in the garden, photo by Kathryn Vercillo

The Garden at the Airbnb

What was perfect about this garden was that it was lush and beautiful ... but it wasn't perfectly manicured. In other words, if my dogs trampled it a little bit, which my dogs do, nobody was going to complain. That's exactly the kind of garden that we needed.

The backyard consisted of a ground level and then a small set of stairs up to a slight upper level. On the upper level sat a wooden swing. The garden included plants throughout both levels. From the upper level, a perimeter of plants extended around much of the yard against the fence.

There were a variety of different plants and trees in this garden. I honestly didn't look closely enough at most of them to identify them. I was in a state of wanting to just receive the overall impress and indulge in that beauty and sensation. In other words, I didn't want to think about it too much. And it was a beautiful, peaceful garden, so I didn't need to.

There were also a lot of extra decor items in the garden. Wind chimes hung in trees and off of the patio. I adore wind chimes so that was particularly delightful. Statues, fountains, trellis, potted plants, and other decor added to the space. It was all perfect.

The Pleasures of Another Person's Garden

What was particularly great about enjoying this garden is it's the kind of space that I like but I probably wouldn't create myself. We all have different styles and sometimes we just don't think about doing things the way that someone else might

do them. When we spend time in those other spaces, we get inspiration. Sometimes we use that inspiration to make changes in our own space. Sometimes we just delight in the differences while we're in the other space. Either way, it's a beautiful experience.

Indulging, Enjoying, Without Working

The best part of enjoying someone else's garden for just a short period of time is that there's no work to be done there. Yes, working in the garden can be meditative and enjoyable. But sometimes you just want to rest and indulge in what the garden has to offer without having to do any work. At least, I do. Do you?

If I'm in my own space, I always see the flaws, the imperfections, the little things that still need to be taken care of. Even if I'm just relaxing in the space and overall not feeling the need to "work" in it, it's still a little nagging thing in the back of my mind. This could be watered, that could be swept up, this needs to be planted ... It's hard to look at your own space without thinking of what there is to be done. At least, it is hard for me. Is it hard for you?

However, I don't have any of those judgments in another person's space. I simply enjoy what is there to be enjoyed. I'm more in the moment. The birds were chirping, the squirrels were scurrying, the leaves were fluttering ... and I didn't feel any particular need to do anything, fix anything, water anything, trim anything. I could simply mindfully take in all of the details of the space without any obligation or desire to do anything more than exactly that.

Other Pleasures of Another's Garden

Some of the other things that are great about spending time enjoying someone's garden other than your own might include:

- Bonding with the person whose garden it is, celebrating their space with them
- Enjoying seeing and even learning about plants that differ from those in your own space, especially if you've traveled far from home to someone else's garden
- Likewise, enjoying plants that you would never plant yourself – flowers if you're a vegetable gardener, for example, or vice versa
- And finally, returning home to your own garden with a completely different perspective and appreciation for it

Read More:

- [Could My Dogs Save Me Money in the Garden?](#)
 - [A Visit to Hollister House Garden](#)
 - [Greek Gardening Style on the Cheap](#)
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Could My Dogs Save Me Money in The Garden?



I'm casually looking to move into a new place where I would have more of a yard. This means that I would have more space for plant life. It also means that my dogs would have a place to romp around. However, those two things would be shared. For the most part, I assume that the dogs aren't great for a garden. They dig, they chew, they barrel their big bodies around and bang into things. But I'm trying to see it another way. What benefits could the dogs have for the garden? Could they even help me save money there?

Pest Control

Dogs obviously have an incredible sense of smell. And mine are keen on protecting their territory. This natural instinct could make them excellent at warding off common garden pests. Squirrels, raccoons, and other critters might think twice before venturing into a garden where a dog is on patrol. This isn't an issue where I'm living now. However, I know that in

homes I've stayed at in the past where there are bigger yards, this is definitely a common issue. My dogs wouldn't harm the other animals but they would likely chase them off which means that those creatures couldn't come in and damage the plant life.

Natural Fertilizer?

One of the questions I have is whether or not their dog waste could be used as a natural fertilizer. In other words, can I compost their poop and use it for plants? After all, my two large dogs generate a whole lot of waste!

As far as I can tell from searching online and asking in forums, it seems that you can safely compost your own dog's waste. You don't want to use it as fertilizer on edible plants. In other words, if I was going to grow vegetables to eat then I wouldn't want to use my dog's waste there.

However, if the plants are hardy and aren't going to be consumed by humans, then it seems safe to compost the waste for that purpose. The [American Kennel Club](#) explains that the two biggest concerns are the odor and the potential for parasites or germs. However, they note that the odor is easy to control when composting. More importantly, they explain that if you're just in your own yard with your own dogs and they get regular wellness treatments then it's actually fairly unlikely that you're going to have parasites.

It's something I'd have to do more research on but it seems possible that the dogs could save money in the garden by providing this natural fertilizer opportunity.

Benefits of Digging Dogs

My dogs dig. I tend to assume that this would be a problem in a garden. However, that isn't necessarily the only way to view

this story. If the dogs can learn to dig in certain places where they're allowed to dig, then they might actually offer some benefits to the garden. For example:

1. **Weed Control:** Dogs can help control weeds by trampling or digging them up. Their natural curiosity can lead to them digging in the garden, inadvertently uprooting weeds and preventing their growth.
2. **Compost Turners:** Some dogs enjoy digging in compost piles. While this behavior may not be appreciated in all cases, it can be beneficial for turning and aerating compost, which accelerates decomposition and produces nutrient-rich compost for your garden.
3. **Soil Aeration:** When dogs play or run in the garden, their paws can help aerate the soil. This improved soil structure enhances root growth and water penetration, benefiting plant health.

Could I teach the dogs to dig in the right places?

Obviously, there's more to unpack here. Could the dogs learn where to dig and where not to dig? Possibly. I currently allow them to play with recyclables in the home. They know which area contains the stuff they're allowed to destroy and they don't destroy other things.

So, they could definitely learn. For example, I could teach them to dig in the compost. Although, honestly, I have mixed feelings about that because then there's compost on their paws when they come back in the house. But I don't know if I could really teach them about digging up weeds and leaving the rest of the plants alone.

The Joy of the Garden

Honestly, the thing that my dogs do most for me is bring me

lots of joy. They live in the moment. They remind me to be curious, open, and playful. As a result, they help enliven any space so that I appreciate it more. They would definitely do this if we had a bigger yard for them. They would definitely help me appreciate that space more.

This has the potential to save money while adding joy in a few different ways. First of all, it means that we would all spend more time in the yard together. This means that I wouldn't have to spend money on a dog walker to take them out because they would get their exercise with me in the yard. As a byproduct of that, I would get my own exercise in the yard. More time in the yard means less time on other forms of potentially expensive entertainment to pass the time.

Also, when you're in the garden more, you're going to focus more on what's there. I imagine that spending more time in the garden would allow me to see more potential there. It would allow me to see how to help different plants thrive. Moreover, it would show me opportunities for creative expression in the gardening process. As my dogs investigate things up close, so will I. All of this has the potential to improve the garden, the lives of myself and the pups, and maybe even cost savings on our activities back there.

What do you think? Are dogs good for a garden, bad for a garden, or are there just simply pros and cons to consider?

Read More:

- [5 Reasons I Enjoy Lia's Living Almanac](#)
- [How to Garden Frugally](#)
- [20 Tips for Gardening with Dogs](#)
- [10 Household Items That Can Be Composted – and 5 That Can't](#)

Top 8 Gardening YouTube Channels You Should Follow in 2023



Whether you're a seasoned gardener seeking new inspiration or a novice looking to cultivate your first window box of herbs, the world of gardening YouTube has something for everyone. From urban gardening to permaculture, from succulents to heirloom vegetables, let's explore the Top Gardening YouTube Channels You Should Follow in 2023. Each channel offers a unique bouquet of tips, tricks, and inspiration for plant enthusiasts of all levels. So, grab your gardening gloves and prepare to dig into a digital world of horticultural wonder that's just a click away.

Benefits of Watching Gardening YouTube

Watching gardening YouTube channels offers a plethora of benefits for both novice and experienced gardeners. Here are some of the advantages:

Education and Information

Gardening YouTube channels are treasure troves of knowledge. They provide viewers with step-by-step tutorials, gardening tips, and expert advice on various gardening topics. Whether you want to learn how to start a new garden, troubleshoot plant problems, or understand gardening techniques, YouTube is the go-to educational resource.

Visual Learning

Gardening is a hands-on activity. YouTube gardening videos allow you to see gardening practices in action. Visual demonstrations can be incredibly helpful in understanding concepts like pruning, transplanting, or composting. It's like having a gardening mentor right in your living room.

Inspiration

Gardening channels often showcase beautiful gardens and creative landscaping ideas. Watching these videos can spark your creativity and motivate you to try new things in your garden. You may discover innovative ways to design your garden, arrange plants, or incorporate new features.

Problem-Solving

If you encounter issues with your plants or garden, YouTube can be a valuable resource for troubleshooting. Many gardening YouTubers address common problems like pests, diseases, or

poor soil quality and provide solutions to overcome these challenges.

Variety of Expertise

There's a wide array of gardening channels, each specializing in different aspects of gardening. Whether you're interested in organic gardening, container gardening, landscape design, or growing specific types of plants, you can find channels that cater to your interests.

Community and Interaction

Many gardening YouTubers foster a sense of community among their viewers. You can engage with fellow gardening enthusiasts by leaving comments, asking questions, and sharing your own experiences. This sense of belonging and interaction can enhance your gardening journey.

Cost-Efficient

Gardening YouTube videos often provide cost-effective solutions and DIY ideas. You can learn how to make your compost, build garden structures, or propagate plants without spending a fortune on gardening supplies. We're all about that around here!

Global Perspective

YouTube connects you with gardeners from around the world, exposing you to different gardening styles, climates, and plant varieties. This broadens your perspective and offers insights into how gardening practices vary across regions.

Meditative and Soothing

Honestly, the garden videos are sometimes just nice to have on in the background as well. They're pretty, they sometimes have

nice music, and they're relaxing.

Top 8 Gardening YouTube Channels You Should Follow in 2023

There are so many different channels to choose from, of course. Take the time to explore and find the ones that you love most. that said, here are the ones we think you might love to start with:

1. [0YR Frugal & Sustainable Organic Gardening](#)

One Yard Revolution has over 260,000 followers for a reason. Anyone interested in frugal gardening will find the videos on this site helpful. More specifically, if you're interested in staying healthy while creating a sustainable, organic fruit and vegetable garden without spending a lot of money, then this channel will be for you. There are currently enough videos on this channel that you could watch one each day for a year and never repeat.

2. [Nextdoor Homestead](#)

This one is a bit smaller but still has a strong following and more than 60 videos for you to watch. The two hosts are relatable gardeners. They specialize in urban gardening of fruits and vegetables. Follow them on their journey as they learn what works and what doesn't.

3. [Urban Gardening](#)

We can't mention Urban Gardening without mentioning this one. It's got more than 1.6 million followers who learn every day about the art of urban gardening. Find playlists about herbs, flowers, succulents and so much more.

4. [Suburban Homestead](#)

If you have a suburban garden instead of an urban one, then this is a good option for videos for you. It's separated into seasons, which is appealing if you tend to like a more traditional television viewing format. There's a wide variety of video types including gardening hacks, garden design ideas, and masterclasses in gardening. There is also some really interesting history of gardens/plants included.

5. [Goldifarms](#)

Erin says,

"I'm on a journey to heal the earth and myself by cultivating a food forest here on the beautiful Central Coast of California in zone 9a. My intention with this YouTube channel is to inspire so that we can all create a more beautiful world that our hearts know is possible."

If you're interested in permaculture, healing with plants, and optimism, then this channel is for you.

6. [The Scaredy Cat Gardener](#)

Do you want to start with a small container garden? Are you interested in growing food to cook with? Do you want to watch a channel that isn't at all intimidating? This is the channel for you. With more than 700 videos of varying lengths, you're sure to find something that helps you out here.

7. [Dig, Plant, Water, Repeat](#)

Do you love flower gardening? Here's a channel to excite you. Playlists include gardening for beginners, garden tours, water management, and plant profiles. There's a wealth of information that's all accessible.

8. [Epic Gardening](#)

This channel is committed to trying to help people all around the world learn how to garden. With more than 2.5 million subscribers, they seem to be well on their way. You can learn how to grow very specific items, from cucumbers to pineapples, cacti to potatoes. You can learn about different types of gardening such as vertical gardening, raised bed gardening, and even aquatic gardening. Moreover, you can find information on gardening tips, garden projects, and life in the garden.

Read More:

- [Substack Gardening: Must Read Gardening Newsletters for Nature Lovers](#)
 - [10 Best Gardening Podcasts Worth Listening To](#)
 - [Playlist: Best Songs About Gardens](#)
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10 Steps to Learning to Garden Meditate



Gardening was never my forte. Honestly, I proudly wore the label of a “brown thumb” for most of my life. I’d often cringe at the thought of tending to plants, certain I’d unintentionally send them to an early demise. Little did I know that my journey from reluctant gardener to someone who finds solace in the garden would be a transformative experience. It’s the mindfulness/ meditation aspect that does that for me. Here are the ten steps that it took to get there.

1. Starting Small

My first foray into gardening was timid. I began with a single-potted plant—a resilient succulent known for its ability to withstand my neglect. It required minimal care, allowing me to build confidence slowly. It wasn’t the first one I’d ever bought. I had killed others before. But I was ready, albeit with baby steps.

2. Learning Through Mistakes

The beginning was marked by countless failures. Overwatering, underwatering, and choosing the wrong plants were all part of the learning curve. But with each mishap, I began to observe the subtleties of my plants' needs, fostering a sense of mindfulness in the process. I honestly never thought that I'd get there. My sister always tells me "Just ask the plant what it wants." I always thought she was nuts. But she's not. You observe and you attend and you are mindful and then it starts to all click.

3. Patience and Presence

Gardening helped teach me the art of patience and presence. Instead of rushing through tasks, I started to slow down, observing the nuances of my plants. And when I failed to do that, they died. This repeatedly reminded me of the importance of being fully engaged in the moment. This is really what mindfulness is all about.

4. The Healing Power of Nature

Amidst the frustrations and mishaps, I found solace in nature's healing embrace. The garden became my refuge, a place where I could escape the chaos of daily life and immerse myself in the serenity of the natural world. I am an urban woman. However, I love the fact that San Francisco offers so many opportunities to immerse yourself in nature within the city itself. You don't even have to have your garden. You can enjoy any of the small and large gardens throughout the city as spots for meditation.

5. Nurturing Growth, Both Plant and

Self

As my gardening skills improved, I noticed a parallel growth within myself. Tending to plants became a metaphor for self-care and nurturing personal growth. I found that the more I nurtured my garden, the more I nurtured my well-being. The more I nurtured myself, the easier it was to remember to nurture the plants. It helps to feel more tied into nature.

6. Accepting Imperfection

Gardening taught me to embrace imperfection. Not every plant thrived, and not every leaf remained unblemished. Just as I accepted my plants' flaws, I learned to accept my imperfections with greater compassion. This is something I've worked in throughout my life, particularly through therapy. There are many ways of approaching it. The point is that gardening teaches us things like this in a somatic, experiential way that differs from just thinking about it.

7. Mindful Observations

In the garden, I developed the practice of mindful observation. I'd spend moments simply gazing at the play of sunlight on leaves, the dance of pollinators, or the delicate unfurling of a bud. These contemplative moments allowed me to connect with the beauty of the present. They reminded me that everything that's happening in my head is related to the past or the future. What's happening right now in front of me is what's real. The rest is usually just noise. By teaching myself to focus on just one thing in a garden, I learned mindfulness. And that leads to learning meditation.

8. Letting Go of Control

Gardening reminded me that life, like the garden, is filled with uncontrollable variables. I couldn't command the rain to

fall or the sun to shine. I couldn't always shield my plants from pests or disease. Even when it seemed like I was doing everything right, plants would fail to thrive. It was hard. I wanted to fix it.

However, in relinquishing the illusion of control, I discovered a profound sense of freedom. It was a reminder that there is beauty in the natural ebb and flow of existence. Sometimes, the most vibrant blooms emerge from the unexpected and unplanned corners of life.

Gardening became a symbol of embracing impermanence. It offers an ongoing lesson in letting go that extends far beyond the garden's borders into my life. I still struggle with wanting to control everything but it reminds me again and again that it is okay that I cannot.

9. Celebration of Growth

Each tiny sprout, every new leaf, and the first bloom are all reasons for celebration. Witnessing the gradual transformation of my garden taught me to savor the journey and appreciate the beauty of growth. As with all of the other lessons, this was less about the garden than it was about myself. I exist in cycles and seasons but am also always growing. It's a powerful thing and it's nice to see it outside of yourself then to see how it relates to the inside of yourself.

10. Gardening as a Meditation Practice

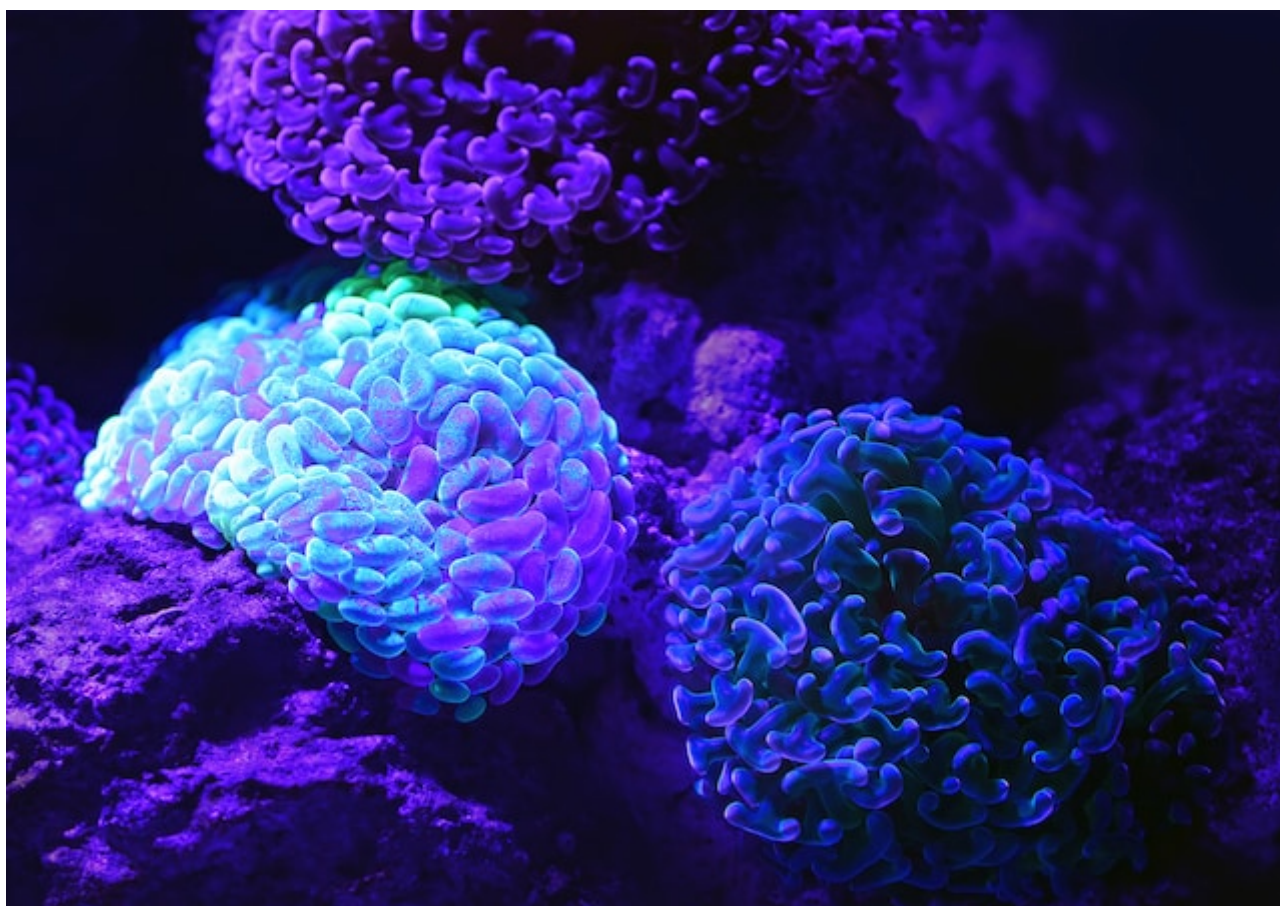
Surprisingly, I found that gardening was my form of meditation or mindfulness. The act of tending to plants, gazing upon the deep colors of flowers, and immersing myself in nature's rhythms all became a profound mindfulness practice. I didn't know that this would happen although looking back it seems inevitable. By learning not to worry about "doing it right"

and just being present in the act of doing it, I was able to allow things to grow. And in the process, I grew, too.

Read More:

- [The Gardener's Brain](#)
 - [Substack Gardening: Must-Read Newsletters if You Love Gardening](#)
 - [A Visit to Hollister House Garden](#)
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The Gardener's Brain



As you stand amidst the lush, vibrant foliage of a garden, your busy mind settles into the soothing rhythm of the natural world. The rumination stops. You notice the gentle rustling of

leaves, the cheerful chorus of birdsong, and the earthy aroma of freshly turned soil. It's in these still moments that you realize there's something profoundly transformative happening inside your mind. This is a phenomenon that we might refer to as "the gardener's brain."

What Is The Gardener's Brain?

"The gardener's brain" is more than just a pretty metaphor. It's actually related to the science of how gardening impacts the brain. [Research](#) has uncovered that activities as seemingly simple as digging, planting, and weeding trigger a cascade of neural responses within the brain.

When gardeners immerse themselves in these tasks, their bodies release a surge of endorphins. These are the body's natural mood elevators, promoting feelings of happiness and well-being. This natural release of endorphins not only enhances mood. It also acts as a potent pain reliever, reducing the perception of discomfort and stress. The gardener's brain, it appears, [is itself a garden of sorts](#) – a garden of neurochemical delights.

Neurology and Gardening

Gardening engages various neurological aspects that contribute to its positive impact on mental well-being. Here are some key neurological aspects of gardening:

Endorphin Release

Gardening activities like digging, planting, and weeding stimulate the release of endorphins, which are natural chemicals produced by the brain that help reduce pain and induce feelings of pleasure and relaxation.

Dopamine Production

Engaging in gardening can lead to the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and reward. This can result in a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction when seeing plants thrive.

Stress Reduction

Gardening has been shown to lower cortisol levels, a stress hormone, leading to reduced feelings of anxiety and stress. This reduction in stress hormones can have a calming effect on the brain.

Improved Mood

Spending time in nature and tending to plants can elevate mood by increasing the production of serotonin, a neurotransmitter linked to feelings of happiness and well-being.

Enhanced Cognitive Function

Gardening involves planning, problem-solving, and attention to detail, which can stimulate cognitive function and help maintain mental sharpness, especially in older adults.

Sensory Stimulation

Gardening engages multiple senses, including touch, smell, sight, and sometimes taste. This sensory stimulation activates different parts of the brain, providing a holistic cognitive experience.

Mindfulness and Meditation

Gardening often encourages mindfulness, promoting a state of focused attention on the present moment. This practice can have a positive impact on the brain's neural pathways associated with stress regulation and emotional control.

Neuroplasticity

Engaging in new gardening tasks and challenges can promote neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to adapt and rewire itself. This adaptability is crucial for learning and memory.

Social Connection

Gardening in a community or with others can activate areas of the brain associated with social bonding and cooperation, fostering a sense of belonging and connection.

Positive Associations

Over time, the brain forms positive associations with the act of gardening, making it a source of pleasure and relaxation, which can lead to long-term mental health benefits.

The Brain Benefits of Digging, Planting and Weeding

Let's take a bit of a closer look at how each of these three stages of gardening affect the gardener's brain in relation to the above.

The Brain Benefits of Digging

Digging, a fundamental gardening activity, offers numerous brain benefits. As the gardener plunges their hands into the soil and wields a spade, the brain's reward system springs into action, releasing dopamine—a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and motivation. This surge of dopamine not only fosters a sense of accomplishment but also reinforces the satisfaction of physically shaping the earth. Additionally, the rhythmic, repetitive nature of digging can induce a meditative state, reducing stress and anxiety while enhancing concentration. This combination of pleasurable stimulation, meditative engagement, and tangible outcomes makes digging a

cognitive workout for the brain, improving mood and mental well-being.

The Brain Benefits of Planting

Planting seeds or young plants is a gardening endeavor that brings unique neurological advantages. When gardeners delicately position a seedling into the ground or gently nestle seeds into the soil, they engage fine motor skills and tactile senses, activating areas of the brain associated with touch and spatial awareness. The act of planting also instills a sense of hope and anticipation—a future harvest or a flourishing flowerbed—triggering the release of dopamine, which elevates mood and motivation. Furthermore, the nurturing aspect of planting fosters a deep emotional connection with the growing life, offering a source of ongoing satisfaction and a sense of responsibility. This emotional bond contributes to a sense of purpose, enhancing overall mental well-being.

The Brain Benefits of Weeding

Weeding, often perceived as a mundane chore, conceals surprising neurological benefits. As gardeners meticulously remove unwanted plants or invasive weeds, they engage in an activity that demands focus and attention to detail. This heightened concentration can lead to a state of mindfulness, where the brain is fully immersed in the task at hand, relieving stress and promoting relaxation. Moreover, the act of weeding provides a tangible sense of progress and control over one's environment, which can boost self-esteem and reduce feelings of powerlessness. In essence, weeding transforms a seemingly routine task into a therapeutic exercise for the brain, offering mental clarity and emotional satisfaction amidst the garden's green tapestry.

Notice Your Changing Gardener's Brain

Since you started gardening, you might have noticed some amazing changes in your brain. You might feel happier and more relaxed when you're in your garden, thanks to all the fresh air and natural beauty around you. You might also find that you're better at focusing and solving problems now, probably because gardening makes you pay close attention to what you're doing. Plus, you've learned to be patient and persistent, just like your plants, which has made you more resilient in other parts of your life. Remember this each time that you head out to the garden. Celebrate all that this hobby does for you.

Read More:

- [The Best Plants for Mental Health Benefits](#)
 - [Being a Beginner In the Garden](#)
 - [13 Gardening Books on My To Be Read Shelf](#)
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My Favorite Garden Metaphors



The garden and the things that grow in it provide such great lessons for life. Perhaps that's why there are so many terrific gardening metaphors. By looking at what nature has to teach us, we truly can learn a lot. So, here are some of my favorite garden metaphors and what I love about them.

Life is a Garden and You Are the Gardener

This metaphor beautifully encapsulates a powerful life lesson about personal responsibility, growth, and mindfulness. Just as a garden requires careful tending, planning, and nurturing to flourish, so does our life. Further thoughts on what we can learn from this idea that [life is a garden](#):

- **Personal Responsibility:** In a garden, every plant's well-being depends on the gardener's attention and care.

Similarly, in life, we are responsible for our own growth and happiness. We have the power to make choices, set goals, and take actions that shape our path.

- **Growth and Development:** Gardens need regular care, including watering, weeding, and pruning, for plants to reach their full potential. Likewise, in life, personal growth and development require continuous effort, learning from challenges, and letting go of things that no longer serve us.
- **Patience and Perseverance:** Gardens don't bloom overnight; they need time and patience to bear fruit and flowers. Similarly, in life, achieving our dreams and aspirations often demands perseverance and resilience. It's essential to keep moving forward, even when progress seems slow.
- **Mindfulness and Attention:** Successful gardeners are attentive to their plants, noticing signs of distress, and providing the necessary care. In life, being mindful and present allows us to recognize when we need self-care, prioritize our well-being, and build strong connections with others.
- **Seasons of Change:** Gardens experience cycles of growth, dormancy, and renewal as the seasons change. In life, we, too, go through various stages, facing ups and downs, but like the garden, we can adapt, grow, and evolve as we navigate life's different phases.

Life's Garden is Filled with Seeds of Opportunity

This metaphor likens life to a vast garden filled with seeds representing various opportunities and possibilities. Just as a garden offers an array of seeds waiting to be sown, life presents us with countless opportunities for growth and success. Further thoughts:

- **Abundance of Choices:** Just as a garden has diverse seeds, life offers us a myriad of choices and paths to explore. We are presented with opportunities for education, career, relationships, personal interests, and more. Embracing this abundance empowers us to make informed decisions that align with our passions and values.
- **Nurture and Cultivation:** Seeds need nurturing, proper care, and the right environment to grow into thriving plants. Similarly, seizing opportunities in life requires dedication, effort, and persistence. By investing time and energy into our pursuits, we can cultivate our potential for success.
- **Timing and Patience:** In a garden, different seeds germinate and grow at their own pace. Similarly, in life, seizing opportunities may require patience and recognizing the right timing for certain endeavors. Understanding that success may not come overnight helps us stay committed and focused.
- **Weeding out Negativity:** Just as weeds can hinder a garden's growth, negativity and self-doubt can impede our progress in life. By recognizing and removing negative thoughts or influences, we create space for positive opportunities and personal growth.
- **Embracing Diversity:** A diverse garden is beautiful and enriching. Similarly, embracing the diversity of opportunities in life allows us to expand our horizons, learn new things, and experience a more fulfilling journey.
- **Harvesting Rewards:** A well-tended garden eventually yields a bountiful harvest. Similarly, taking advantage of life's opportunities and pursuing our dreams can lead to the fulfillment of our goals and aspirations.

Planting Seeds of Success

This gardening metaphor emphasizes the importance of taking intentional actions and making consistent efforts to achieve success in our endeavors. Here are some key lessons that can be drawn from this metaphor:

1. **Vision and Goals:** Just as a gardener starts with a vision of the garden they want to create, success begins with setting clear and meaningful goals. Identifying what we want to achieve gives us direction and purpose.
2. **Embracing Failure:** Not every seed will grow into a plant, and not every attempt will lead to immediate success. Embracing failure as part of the growth process allows us to learn, adapt, and improve on our journey to success.
3. **Cultivating Skills and Knowledge:** A gardener may need to learn about various plant species and gardening techniques. Similarly, acquiring new skills and knowledge relevant to our goals enhances our capabilities and chances of success.
4. **Creating the Right Environment:** Just as certain plants thrive in specific conditions, success may require creating an environment that supports our growth and development. Surrounding ourselves with supportive people and a positive atmosphere can be beneficial.
5. **Consistency and Daily Actions:** Success often comes from consistent daily actions and habits. Like watering and caring for a garden regularly, consistent efforts contribute to steady progress and growth.
6. **Adaptability and Flexibility:** Gardeners adjust their strategies based on weather and other conditions. Similarly, being adaptable and flexible in our approach allows us to navigate changes and challenges on the path to success.
7. **Celebrating Progress:** As plants grow, gardeners take joy in their progress. Likewise, celebrating small

milestones and achievements motivates us to keep moving forward and maintain a positive outlook.

Harvesting the Fruits of Our Labor

This conveys the idea of reaping the rewards and benefits of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. Just as a farmer collects the fruits of their labor during harvest time, we too can experience the gratification of our efforts in various aspects of life. Here are some essential lessons from this metaphor:

- **Delayed Gratification:** Like crops that take time to mature, achieving significant accomplishments may require patience and delayed gratification. Understanding that results might not be immediate encourages us to stay committed to our endeavors.
- **Effort and Investment:** Farmers invest time, resources, and energy in their fields, and in life, hard work and effort are necessary to yield meaningful results. The more we invest, the more we stand to gain.
- **Joy in the Harvest:** Harvest time is a moment of celebration for farmers. In life, reaching milestones and achieving our goals brings a sense of fulfillment, joy, and pride in what we have accomplished.
- **Reaping What We Sow:** The quality of the harvest depends on the care given during planting and cultivation. In life, the outcomes we experience are often a reflection of the choices and actions we make along the way.
- **Gratitude and Abundance:** Harvest time is a time of abundance, and it reminds us to be grateful for what we have achieved. Practicing gratitude for our successes enhances our overall sense of contentment and fulfillment.
- **Renewal and Planning:** After harvest, farmers plan for the next planting season. In life, success should be seen as part of an ongoing journey, encouraging us to

set new goals and continue our pursuit of growth and improvement.

You may notice that a lot of these lessons are themselves metaphors related to gardening: reaping what we sow, harvesting rewards, cultivating gratitude ... turn to your garden to see what life lessons it has to teach you!

Read More:

- [Playlist: Best Songs About Gardens](#)
 - [Gardening for Mental Health](#)
 - [Being a Beginner in the Garden](#)
-

Substack Gardening: Must-Read Newsletters If You Love Nature



I recently shared with you how much I was loving [Lia's Living Almanac](#). It's a Substack newsletter related to plants and gardening. However, it's not the only one that I subscribe to. Substack has many different gardening and nature newsletters that you might want to check out. Therefore, I wanted to share some more of my favorites with you today.

What Is Substack?

If you're not familiar with Substack, then I'll give you a brief overview. Substack is a platform where you can easily create a newsletter. However, unlike other newsletter platforms, such as MailChimp, your newsletter also acts as a sort of blog. People who sign up for your newsletter will receive it in their email. Alternatively, they can read it on the Substack app or website. People who aren't signed up for the newsletter can see your articles on the site or app. Then they can decide if they want to sign up or not.

Best Gardening and Nature Substacks

I shared previously about Lia's Living Almanac which is great for people who are inspired by growing and cooking their food. Let me share some of my other favorites with you now:

Creatively Conscious

This is an intentional newsletter / digital magazine by creative / writer Claire Venus. She celebrates slow living and the well-being it brings, writes about nature in her life, and shares thoughts on motherhood and more. She recently shared her creative garden project called [The Soil Web](#). Claire explains it's "all about soil, making soil using worm hotels and observing the bio-diversity of soil!"

June's Writing

June Girvin is a retired nursing professor and "Reader, writer, knitter, walker, gardener, critic." She chats conversationally about all different types of things in her newsletter, with gardening showing up prominently. She shares photos and descriptions of what is going on in her own garden. I often find that I learn best just by hearing other people's stories and what they're doing to problem solve. This fits me better than "Here's how to do things in three steps." So that's one of the reasons that her newsletter is appealing to me.

Also, she did a great important post on [planting for pollinators](#). We discussed that recently here on our site. And it's the kind of thing that will show up in good gardening/nature newsletters from time to time. As you'll discover, most of the writers on Substack are sharing a variety of different things that overlap and it weaves gardening into that.

Garden Study

[Garden Study](#) is a subsection of a larger Substack called Culture Study. It's authored by Anne Helen Petersen who shares many different smart thoughts about culture but wanted to create this section just to talk about the joys of gardening. As of the writing of this post, some of the recent articles in Garden Study related to container gardening, gardening mistakes, square foot gardening, and practicing patience when gardening with kids.

Note that this is a subscription-based newsletter. Substack allows authors to offer both free and paid content. Most authors offer both. Garden Study is an opt-in optional newsletter for paying subscribers but you do get a little bit of preview content before you pay. (Also, it's good to pay if you can; these newsletters don't write themselves!)

Life in the Real World

This newsletter will be one of your favorites if you love nature photos. Author Karen Davis is a nature photographer as well as a writer. She shares "Drops of Beauty" regularly which are photo-rich looks at nature. They delight me every single time that I open one.

[About the newsletter](#), Karen writes:

"This newsletter will be full of photos and reflections on what nature teaches me every day about beauty, wonder, and living in the world. I hope you will find it grounding, meditative, sometimes illuminating, and full of genuine curiosity about this strange thing we call Life."

Nebolina Wool Dye Studio Notes

I've previously shared with you how I'm interested in gardening plants for natural dyes to dye yarn or fabric.

There's so much great information in this newsletter that's all about that. The newsletter is written by Sara Meinecke who calls herself a "Natural dyer, knitter, sewer, slow fashion enthusiast." That's right up my alley (although I crochet instead of knit.) She explains that her Substack newsletter is about "sharing natural color processes, exploring local color palettes, and connecting with sustainability."

Recently, she shared a post about [Artist Dates](#). These are part of Julia Cameron's Artist's Way practice, in which you take yourself on a weekly solo creative date. What I love about the post is that it's a roundup of artist-date ideas specifically for natural dyers. For example, doing a dye color test of a plant local to your area or taking yourself on a nature walk. Very inspiring and creative!

The Gardening Mind by Jo Thompson

This is one of the most comprehensive resources on Substack related to gardening. Authored by a garden designer, it's rich in helpful tips and information about all aspects of gardening. There are sections for small gardens, planting design, what not to do in the garden, resilient and sustainable gardening, and more. If you're looking for just one newsletter that will help you get started with gardening information, then this is where you might want to begin.

Radicle

This is a place that shares essays and thoughts from multiple contributors about alternative gardening. If you're interested in social justice issues and climate concerns as they relate to gardening, then this is the spot for you.

Remembering Wild by Sez Kristiansen

This is a beautifully written newsletter about a variety of different topics related to rewinding, the spirituality of

nature, natural remedies, creativity, mental health, and more. In terms of gardening, Sez says that the space is for you if, among other things, you, “love the wild outdoors, gardening or being in nature.” That would be us, right? It includes a podcast and meditation. While it’s not a typical gardening newsletter, it’s one you’ll like if gardening is part of a slow-living path for you.

Read more:

- [5 Things I Learned About Gardening in 2022](#)
- [Book Review: A Garden to Dye For](#)
- [10 Best Gardening Podcasts Worth Listening To](#)