

Free Garden Party Plants

There are a lot of different ways to [acquire free plants](#) and even [unusual ways](#) depending on how adventurous you are. Another sneaky way to acquire free plants is to throw a Garden Party.

No, not the big hat, posh refreshment type of Garden Party, but a party to increase the size of your garden. Grab your list of friends & acquaintances, be it on your PC, your palm pilot or an old fashioned address book and let's get started. Here's a list to-do list to start you thinking, but feel free to skip some or add others to tailor the party to your group of friends.

First you need to **pick a date**. It's best to hold this between late spring and harvest season so people have plenty of plants to share. Along with the date, you need to **pick a place**. The party would work in a public garden or at a home, inside or outside, depending on the weather. To round out the three first steps, you need to **pick a time**. Make it convenient when the most number of people can attend – not too early in the morning or too late in the evening. Luncheons usually work best.

Once you have the date, time and place, it's time to **get the invites out**. Do this very early, at least a "Hold the Date" announcement, so guests can plan for the event. At this point, you will need to **explain the event** & let the guests know **what they need to bring**.

An easy way to visualize this is to think of a Cookie Exchange and just substitute plants. Let's say you're inviting 6 people (plus yourself) – each person attending will need to bring 6 plants to share with others. You should give some examples of what types of plants they could bring; Potted plants they have divided, herbs they have started, cuttings they rooted or

houseplants they took cuttings from. It is also a good idea for you to **pot up extra items**, in case one of your guests cancels at the last minute.

In addition, you may want to **ask the guests to bring an ingredient** from their garden to add to a large salad so the cost of a luncheon will be minimal. The host/hostess will then only need to provide salad dressings, beverages and perhaps a dessert to round out the menu.

Another option or addition is to see if guests would like to **bring a garden tool to swap**. Most gardeners have an extra implement that they'd like to switch for something else. All the trades can be set up outside the entry area on a table for convenience.

A way to draw more interest from the participants is to contact your local garden club or nursery to see if anyone would be willing to **speak or show a demo** for your event.

Check out an assortment of gardening magazines and books to **add to the décor**. Anything garden related could be used for centerpieces: flower arrangements, garden implements, flower petals scattered around the tables. Use your imagination here to get everyone in the spirit.

If you hold your party during harvest season, you could also ask everyone to bring extra produce from their gardens to be **taken to your local food bank**. If you do this, be sure you coordinate with the food banks hours so you're sure the items will be delivered when they are fresh.

After spending an afternoon with friends, enjoying a garden fresh salad and learning some valuable garden tips, it will be time for the actual Plant Exchange. Have each guest **describe what they are sharing, along with what type of care it needs and how they used the particular plant** in their gardens. Once done, everyone who attends should have some great new plants to add to their garden.

So what are you waiting for? Start planning and planting for your own Garden Party this season.