

Garden For Free



Is it possible to have a lush flower garden, produce your own veggie patch or just add to the landscaping around your home all for free? Absolutely. One of the easiest ways to do this is to participate in your local chapter of Freecycle. This is a Yahoo list, available at FreeCycle.org. The organization began in 2003 and now boasts close to 3500 chapters, or communities, as they are called and over 2 million subscribers.

The goal of Freecycle is to limit adding to the landfills by recycling usable items. Posts need to be free, legal and appropriate for all ages. Freecycle: a simple solution to get rid of your no longer needed items and a fantastic way to acquire things on your wish list...all for free (minus the gas to go pick the things up!)

Once you have joined the group, please read your communities rules & regs. For example, my local group limits the number of

WANTED posts you may list per month, as well as all participants are asked to list at least as many OFFERS as WANTEDS.

As soon as you're comfortably at home on your local Freecycle list, start posting according to your groups guidelines. Begin small, as you will want to follow through on all posts you receive (in order to be a responsible list member). How about:

WANTED: Strawberry starts/ Lake Stevens

I'll be happy to take your extra plants off your hands, now that many of you will be thinning your strawberry patch. Please let me know if I can assist with the digging too, not afraid of hard work here! Thanks much for freecycling!

Try to time your posts to the gardening tasks currently happening in your area (check our lists here or online for monthly gardening "to do" lists, or your local papers' gardening column) Local gardeners usually hate to throw out good plants and would much rather share with others.

If you're really new to gardening and don't know what you want, you can post something general like:

WANTED: Outdoor plants/ Lake Stevens

I'm new to gardening. Have dirt, shovel and ready to work. Please let me know if you have plants, bushes, trees to share. I would love any help you could give to get my garden growing!

Be sure to send thank you notes to anyone you get plants from and always offer to take any other excess they may have. Strike up a friendship, tell them your interests regarding plants, offer to help in their garden with larger type chores

needing a couple people, ask for advice regarding the plants they did give you and any other gardening questions you may have. Connections like these are the first steps to getting your garden to grow.

So how much did we spend on this so far? A new strawberry patch – Cost: just the gas to go pick up the plants! The same is true with the New Gardener post. You could get your vehicle full of plants for no cost at all. Remember to be flexible, be thankful and grab that shovel and get to work!