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QUEENS PUBLIC LIBRARY



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GROWING GUIDE



Queens
Botanical
Garden

Gardening is a hobby open to all people regardless of skill level, expertise, age, or ability. Working with plants provides many benefits and rewards.

We hope this small guide will help you in your gardening journey this spring and beyond.

About The QPL Seed Library

Good for Beginners and Advanced Gardeners

What is a seed library?

Just like books, you can check out packets of seeds from QPL. You can plant, grow, and harvest the seeds. Any leftover seeds, or new seeds harvested at the end of the growing season, may be brought back to the library.

How does it work?

Check out one (1) set of seed packets per season. This is the same process used for taking home other library materials like books and DVDs.

Where can I check out seeds?

Seeds are available at the following QPL locations: East Elmhurst, Kew Gardens Hills, Queensboro Hill, and Rochdale Village.

What kind of seeds are available?

- Pollinators for bees
- Pollinators for butterflies
- Threatened species



QPL Adult & Teen Gardening Booklist!

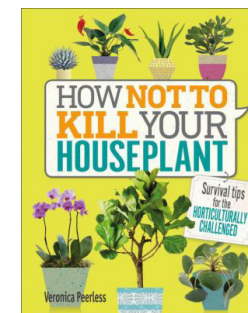
The First-Time Gardener: Growing Plants and Flowers (Adult)

by Allison McManus and Sean McManus

How Not to Kill Your Houseplant: Survival Tips for the Horticulturally Challenged (Adult)

by Veronica Peerless

The New Gardener's Handbook: Everything You Need to Know to Grow a Beautiful & Bountiful Garden (Adult) by Daryl Beyers



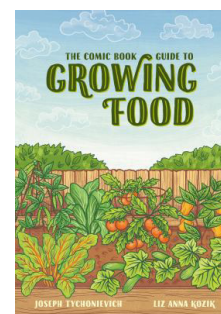
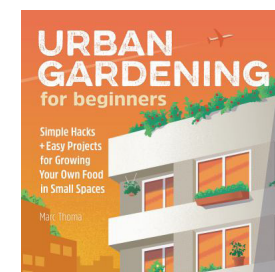
Plant Partners: Science-Based Companion Planting Strategies for the Vegetable Garden (Adult) by Jessica Walliser

Practical Houseplant Book (Adult)
by Zia Allaway and Fran Bailey

The Small Garden Specialist (Adult)
by David Squire

Small Garden Style: A Design Guide for Outdoor Rooms and Containers (Adult) by Isa Hendry Eaton and Jennifer Blaise Kramer

Urban Gardening for Beginners: Simple Hacks + Easy Projects for Growing Your Own Food in Small Spaces (Adult) by Marc Thoma



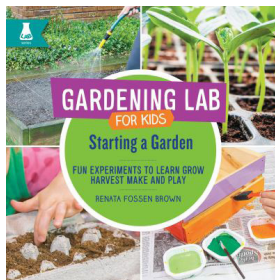
The Comic Book Guide to Growing Food: Step-by-Step Vegetable Gardening for Everyone (Teen)
by Joseph Tychonievich

Guerilla Green: An Urban Gardening Survival Guide (Teen)
by Ophelie Damblé and Cookie Kalkair

QPL Children's Gardening Booklist!

Anywhere Farm by Phyllis Root

Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table
by Jacqueline Briggs Martin



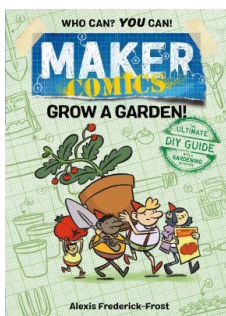
The Garden Project by
Margaret McNamara

*Gardening Lab for Kids:
Starting a Garden*
by Renata Fossen Brown

Harlem Grown by Tony Hillery

It's Our Garden by George Ancona

Let's Get Gardening
Edited by Radhika Haswani



*Maker Comics: Grow
A Garden*
by Alexis Frederick-Frost

The Nitty-Gritty Gardening Book
by Kari Cornell

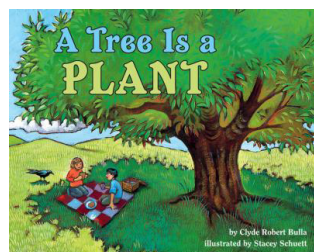
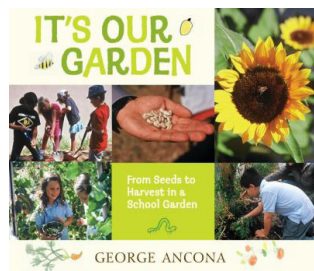
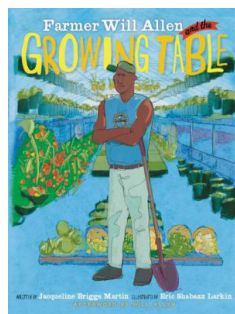
Secrets of the Garden
by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld

A Seed is Sleepy by Dianna Hutts Aston

A Tree is A Plant by Clyde Robert Bulla

Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt
by Kate Messner

Yasmin the Gardener by Saadia Faruqi



Garden Basics

Anyone at any skill level can start a garden! You can design your garden according to your wants and needs. Even small outdoor spaces, container gardens, or windowsill gardens can make a positive impact on your life.

Consider planning a garden around a theme, such as:

**Native NYC Plants | Shade Gardens | Spices & Herbs
Flower Gardens | Vegetable Patches**

It can be helpful to map out your garden in advance. Even a simple sketch can set you up for success.

All plants have specific requirements for growth. These include amount of light, type of soil and drainage, space for growing, time to germination, and time to harvest. Regular maintenance is key for your garden. Expect to spend at least several days a week watering, weeding, pruning plants, treating diseases and pests, and finally harvest.

Pay attention to your garden! It knows what it needs.

EARLY SPRING (March-April)	LATE SPRING (May-June)	SUMMER (June-August)	FALL (Sept-Nov)
Seed starting indoors	Last frost date, Plant outdoors	Maintenance and Harvest	Maintenance and Harvest
Cold weather crops	First harvest (ex: radishes, greens)	Plant for Fall harvest	Cold weather crops

Avoiding Common Problems

Don't be discouraged if your garden isn't growing the way you want! Here are some tips for setting your plants up for success:

1. Check an almanac to know the last frost date in your zip code before planting outside.
2. Give plants enough time to mature before the end of the growing season. Starting pumpkins in late September won't give you Jack-o-lanterns for Halloween!
3. Remember plants will need plenty of space as they grow! Adding too many leads to overcrowding.
4. Use fresh soil (a blend of potting mix and compost) instead of "recycling" old soil. This will ensure your plants have enough nutrients to grow and thrive.
5. Overwatering is very common for houseplants. Research how much water your plant needs and only water when the top inch of soil is dry. Water at the soil level to avoid wet leaves leading to mold growth.
6. Light is essential, especially for indoor plants! Choose the sunniest window in the house to grow, or buy a grow light to provide your plants with enough energy.



When in doubt, look it up or ask a fellow gardener for help!

Queens Public Library has Partnered with the Queens Botanical Garden!

Queens Botanical Garden (QBG) is an urban oasis where people, plants, and cultures are celebrated through inspiring gardens, innovative educational programs, and real-world applications of environmental stewardship.

The Garden will have a private pot for QPL's threatened seeds brought in by YOU!

Visit the oasis in the heart of Flushing, Queens, or check out their website for fun workshops and more!



**Queens
Botanical
Garden**

43-50 Main Street
Flushing, NY 11355
718.886.3800
queensbotanical.org

Resources

- Farmers Almanac: <https://www.farmersalmanac.com/>
- GrowNYC: <https://www.grownyc.org/>
Check out their virtual workshops on YouTube: **GrowNYC - YouTube**
- Planet Natural:
<https://www.planetnatural.com/garden-advice/>
- Seed matters Resource:
<https://seedmatters.org/>



Seed Saving Tips!

- 1. Know your seed.** Don't save seeds from a hybrid variety (often labeled as "F1" in catalogs or seed packets). They won't grow "true to type" to the original parent, and the next generation of plants will be highly unpredictable in overall type, quality, and flavor.
- 2. Save information, not just seed.** Keep good records from the start. The information you pass on is as important as the seed. Make note of common and Latin names; dates of planting, plant maturity, and seed harvest; whether off-types were culled; population size and isolation distance; and any other important observations about the variety.
- 3. Watch for cross-pollination.** Different varieties of crops of the same species can cross-pollinate, producing offspring with different characteristics than the original variety. To keep a variety "pure," you should plant in isolation to minimize the chance of crossing. Crops that are wind or insect pollinated (often called "outcrossers") require a greater isolation distance from other varieties of the same species than those that have flowers that self-pollinate (often called "selfers").
- 4. Consider plant populations—numbers count.** To maintain the genetic integrity of a variety, it's important to save seed from a diverse population of individual plants. The optimum population size differs depending on whether a variety is wind or insect pollinated, or self-pollinated.
- 5. Choose ideal plants for ideal seed.** Healthy, vigorous plants are more likely to produce healthy, vigorous seed. Save seeds from disease-free plants to help prevent seed-borne disease. Also, collect seeds from plants that show ideal characteristics (shape, color, dates to maturity) that match the variety's description.
- 6. Make it last.** Good storage practices will increase the long-term viability of your seed. Store only seed that has been checked for pests and is fully mature and dry. The storage area should be dark, dry, cool, and protected from pests.

Basic Indoor Gardening Tips



- 1. Space:** Your indoor garden can take up as much or as little space as you want! Choose the size of the container that best fits your space.
- 2. Light:** Use natural or artificial lighting to grow your plants. Be mindful of which way your home is positioned. *Do you get more sun in the morning or the evening?*
- 3. Temperature & Humidity:** Temperatures of 65-75°F are best for most indoor plants. Indoor plants dry out quickly, so water when the soil is dry and consider running a humidifier. Don't put your plants too close to your radiator or they'll burn!
- 4. Soil:** Indoor gardens benefit from a good planting medium — soil found outside is **not appropriate**. Instead look for a bagged mix that is specific to indoor plants.
- 5. Choosing Plants:** Many herbs, flowers, and mini varieties of vegetables can be grown inside. If you live with pets or small children, make sure your plants are non-toxic.
- 6. Plant Maintenance:** Prune dead leaves or flowers. This will help your plant grow and avoid disease. Indoor plants often need plant food (fertilizer) to supplement the nutrients in their soil. Watch out for pests, mold, or discoloration that might indicate problems. Treating problems immediately will save you work in the long run!



Small Space — No Problem!

You don't need acres of land to grow plants. Even the smallest spaces can have an indoor garden.

Individual plants can be grown in small containers like window boxes, hanging containers, and pots on windowsills.

Containers can be mounted to a wall, stored on shelves, or tucked anywhere there's enough light.

Many plants are easy to grow in small containers such as:

- Lettuce like iceberg or romaine
- Microgreens or sprouts
- Herbs like basil, chives, parsley, or mint
- Miniature or bush varieties of vegetables like tomatoes, squash, bell peppers, or chilies
- Legumes like green beans or sugar snap peas
- Strawberries and other berries
- Flowers like calendula/marigolds, pansies, mums, violets, geraniums, or begonias
- Succulents like aloe Vera, jade plants, or snake plants



Growing from Kitchen Scraps



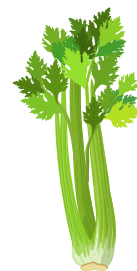
Green onions: Keep the white & root part of the green onion. Place it in soil or a cup with a bit of water in a sunny window. Watch them grow!

Onions: Cut a one inch piece off the root end and place in a bowl of shallow water with the cut surface above the water. Once you see roots, it can be planted in soil. You can even set an entire onion in water and watch it sprout!



Romaine lettuce: Place the romaine heart in water and watch new leaves grow! This is similar to growing green onions.

Celery: Cut about 2 inches from the bottom and place in a shallow bowl of water. Do not submerge. In a week, plant it in soil. Keep in mind that celery is a cool weather crop so plant it in early spring if you are planting outside.



Garlic: Save a clove of garlic and plant it in a pot near a sunny window to have a constant supply of fresh garlic!

Basil, Cilantro, & other herbs: Cut a stem of about 4 inches long and place it into a glass of water in a bright area out of direct sunlight. Do not submerge the leaves in water. When roots form after a few days, move the entire plant to soil.

