

Surprising Benefits of Growing Your Own Food

There's no doubt about the benefits of starting a garden. It's a hobby that can help you improve many areas of your life. Here are some little-known benefits of growing your own food that could inspire you to start doing so if you haven't already.

Gardening Counts as Exercise

Many people know that exercising on a regular basis is beneficial for them, but they may not know that gardening can count as exercise. This may be true for the over [60% of women in the United States](#) who do not engage in the amount of physical activity that they're recommended to do. If they could start a garden at home, no matter how small, it would help them to get some physical activity that they otherwise weren't getting. You will also benefit from spending time outdoors in nature, so start small and you can scale up as you get more experience in gardening.

You Can Save Money

For every additional item that you don't have to go to the store to buy, you can put a little money aside to save. This means that, over time, you may save money by growing your own food. You can effectively grow enough to sustain yourself and this will save you additional trips to the grocery store. Many people wouldn't mind exchanging the time they spend in traffic for time working in their garden, weeding, or planting the next crop. Experiment with different plants to create a variety of options to harvest. You can still save money even if you have to supplement what you cannot grow since you're reduced your food budget already.

You Have Easy Access to Healthier Food

Needless to say, growing more of your own food is a great way to start eating healthier meals. This is because you won't have to make a trip to the store every single time you want to eat fresh food. The easier it is for you to get fresh food, the more compelled you may be to cook healthier recipes. Food products that have fatty acids and oil [will go bad if they are improperly packaged](#), so it's great to be able to access fresh food as it won't come with such risks.

You Live More Sustainably

Growing your own food helps you leave a smaller carbon footprint on the environment. This is because you rely less on food that has to be processed, even if minimally. You also increase the amount of greenery in your environment, something that will benefit the planet and your overall well-being. When you start a garden, you will make your immediate environment a bit greener and possibly inspire others around you to do the same. This can accumulate into great positivity for the environment and it can also help you develop a tighter bond with your family.

You Worry Less About Food Safety

When you have a garden to grow your own food, you can be sure it's grown in good conditions. You don't have to spray it with potentially harmful pesticides and fertilizers, but will likely look for safer alternatives. This is because you know your continued health depends on eating healthy food. For the sake of your health and that of your entire family, you may enjoy growing your own food as it can promote peace of mind. You may also be more inspired to keep your home clean and organized if you have a garden. This is because you need to know where your gardening supplies are. With more than [50% of homeowners](#) saying that their garage is their house's most

disorganized area, it may become easier to keep yours organized if you have to interact with it regularly while gardening. The garage is one of the best locations to store garden tools, bags of soil and mulch, and plants before they are ready to be planted.

Clearly, starting a garden can do a lot of good for you and your family. Don't be intimidated by the terms you hear online and the requirements you may need to start a garden. You can start small and with plants that you're comfortable growing, and over time, you could scale up and enjoy the entire process.

7 Financial Benefits of Backyard Gardening



7 FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF

Backyard Gardening

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You probably started gardening as a hobby. However, you might have always wondered if you could use gardening to save money. You certainly can. In fact, you can actually garden to make

money if you're savvy about it. The financial benefits of backyard gardening go beyond just saving at the grocery store, too! Here are seven ways you can save/make money with your backyard garden:

1. Save Money on Food

Obviously, the first money-saving thing most people think about is eating from their garden. That's definitely one of the financial benefits of backyard gardening. After all, there are so many vegetables and herbs that you can grow yourself at a cost that's significantly lower than what you'd pay for the same quantity at the grocery store. [Earth Easy](#) shares that some of the most cost-effective vegetables to grow include lettuce, bell peppers, squash, tomatoes, and garlic.

2. Sell Your Extras

Many people grow more than they can ever possibly eat in one season. If you're skilled enough to create such a bounty, then you can definitely profit off of it. You might set up a stand at the local farmer's market. Perhaps you just want to set up a table in your own front yard on the weekends. Or maybe you just want to advertise on social media what you're selling during your harvest period. Whatever method you choose, this is a great way to supply others in your area with fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, and even flowers while also making some money.

Remember that you can also harvest your seeds and cuttings for sale to other backyard gardeners. Also, consider bartering with those gardeners. Trading what you have for what you need means that you don't need to spend that extra money at the grocery store.

3. Plants as Gifts

You don't have to spend money on extra gifts when you have plenty growing right in your own backyard. Head back there and pick a bouquet of fresh flowers. Make a basket of fruits and vegetables. Or collect herbs in a little envelope. These are special, personal, useful gifts that don't cost you anything extra since you're gardening anyway.

4. The Money You Save on Entertainment and Exercise

[Debt Helper](#) points out that working in the garden is exercise. Therefore, you save on gym memberships and exercise equipment. Similarly, many people enjoy garden time as a form of entertainment. Cancel your streaming television services and get outside to watch the plants grow instead. These financial benefits of backyard gardening might not be obvious. However, if done intentionally, you can save a lot of money by considering all your garden provides.

5. Health Benefits of Gardening

Gardening offers so many benefits. The exercise you get from it is just one of those benefits. You also get Vitamin D, reduce stress, and derive many other benefits from your garden. Improving your physical and mental health is good for how you feel. It's also good for your bank account. You'll save money by avoiding doctors, medication, and the downtime of ill health.

6. Rent Out Your Garden

[US News](#) notes that you can make extra money by renting out your garden. If you have a beautiful space, then you might rent it out for events. Photographers might like to photograph your garden and the items in it. Even with a small garden, you might rent it out for picnics, wine nights, or craft sessions. Try using Airbnb Experiences to advertise unique opportunities like this for extra income.

7. Offer Gardening Classes

You've already learned a lot in your own backyard garden. Therefore, you possess knowledge that you can share with others. Many people would be willing to pay for your knowledge. Host classes in your garden.

Read More:

- [Profitable Greenhouse Crops: Money in Your Pocket](#)
- [Brice Capital Helped Me Launch My Produce Business](#)
- [4 Smart Garden Devices That Save Time and Money](#)

5 Things To Consider When Recycling Soil



5 THINGS TO CONSIDER

When Recycling Soil

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It's the end of the growing season, and you've tossed your spent container tomato plants in the compost. Can you reuse the soil next year? Here's a soil recycling checklist to go

through before repotting plants in old soil or using last year's soil leftovers in the spring.

Pitfalls of Recycling Soil

Reusing soil is the perfect way for a frugal gardener to save money, but there are some risks involved in potting up new plants with old soil. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Diseases may be lurking.** Soil may contain diseases like viruses or fungi that can infect newly planted plants. Don't reuse soil from a pot with a plant that died of or showed signs of disease.
- **Food may be scarce.** Recycled soil may be deficient in nutrients. Old soil will be depleted of nutrients. You'll need to cut the soil with fertilizer or compost for the best results.

Soil Recycling Checklist

Here are a few things to keep in mind for your soil recycling checklist:

- **Check for [diseases](#) or pests.** Was the previous plant showing signs of disease such as yellowed leaves, stunted growth, or general poor health? If the last plant that grew in that soil was diseased. Toss out the soil rather than recycle it or try to sterilize it.
- **Eliminate weeds.** Are there weeds actively growing in the pot or container? Are there weed seeds hidden inside? Pull the weeds, sterilize the soil, or use it for something other than potting soil.
- **Fertilize.** Old nutrient-depleted soils need to be revived with a fertilizer like compost. Mix some in to boost fertility before recycling the potting soil.
- **Do some testing.** Get the [soil tested](#) to check for pH or nutrient imbalances that can affect nutrient uptake and

plant health.

You can also use old soil for things other than potting up or planting new plants. Use soil to patch up holes in your lawn or add bulk to very large containers. You can also mix old soil into your compost.

How to Sterilize Soil

Let it sit in the sun to kill insects, weed seeds, and pathogens. Alternately, you can also use your oven to zap all the nasty things hiding in old soil.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-RNNQPxnUYE>

Source:

<https://www.bhg.com/gardening/yard/soil/how-to-reuse-potting-soil/>

Are You Ready to Buy a Home?

For most people, buying a home is the biggest expense of their lifetime. On top of that, a home also comes with many additional fees, some unexpected. If you're considering buying a home within the next year, make sure you know everything involved with homeownership. Listed below are a few things to consider.

Varying Interest Rates

You may have read an article that stated mortgage rates are very low and this prompted a call to action. However, what they don't tell you is that, unless you have an exceptional

credit rating, you won't get these rates. Mortgage [rates vary](#) depending on several factors including your credit score, the amount of your down payment, and the location of the property. The higher the interest rate, the higher the mortgage payments.

Debt-to-Income Ratio

Most traditional lenders use your credit score as their primary tool to reach approval. The lower your credit score, the more likely it is that you'll receive a denial. Before applying for a loan, make sure that you review your credit score. The debt-to-income ratio is big with [banks](#). Having four or five credit cards with high balances at or near the available credit will reduce your chances of getting a loan approval at the best rates. Thankfully, you can reduce your credit card debt prior to your application. You can pay extra on the cards until they reach below a third of your available credit. Or, if you want to eliminate them altogether, you can take out a consolidation loan to free up money that you can use to pay off other expenses.

The Down Payment

It only makes sense that, the more you put down on a home, the lower the monthly mortgage payments will be. Many people make the mistake of finding any means necessary to get into a home with little or no down payment. Unfortunately, if you have no savings, chances are the first time your home needs a repair, you won't be able to fix it without taking out another loan. Before buying a home, you should have a sizeable down payment, factoring in at least 10% of the purchase price.

Affordability

If you purchase a house by exhausting all of your financial

resources, you may set yourself up for failure. A home comes with [many expenses](#). Besides the monthly mortgage, you'll have homeowner's insurance, school, and property taxes, and added Private mortgage insurance (PMI) if you put less than 20% down. Like cars, homes also require regular maintenance, only they are much larger. Things like the furnace and HVAC systems require annual servicing, and you will need to look for [roofing companies near me](#) to conduct roof inspections in order to prevent major repairs. The same can be said for the plumbing in your home as well. Then there are the utility bills and garbage removal. Factor in all these fees associated with buying a home.

Ready to Stay in Location

When deciding to buy a home, consider your career path. Buying a home isn't just about whether you can afford it. It also involves remaining in one location, possibly for many years. If you have your dream job and the home is near things like great schools, parks, shopping, and is private, it's a win. However, if you have any doubts about where you may work in a year, hold off on buying a home until you are certain. The last thing you want is to get stuck with a two-hour commute every day. This will cause longer days, enormous stress, and wear and tear on your vehicle.

Are You Handy?

Homes, whether new or older, will require fixing things. In an older home, having the ability to make minor repairs on your own will save thousands of dollars in a single year. Newer homes often have little character. Many people get into these homes and add things like wall units, better flooring, and carpets. If you're handy you'll only pay the cost of supplies which can easily be covered with [emergency cash loans](#) and repaid overtime. However, remember that when it comes down to

repairs concerning electrics or water pipes, it is often better to leave the work to the professionals, such as this [handyman in Avon Lake](#) (or someone offering similar services in your local area), as any damage caused as you attempt a quick and cheap fix can end up being expensive as well as dangerous.

Buying a home is a dream for many Americans. However, if you jump in without factoring in all costs, staying within [your price range](#), and whether you're ready to remain in this location, you may end up with regrets.

5 Houseplants That Won't Waste Your Money



5 HOUSEPLANTS

That Won't Waste Your Money

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Ever since the pandemic began, I slowly started buying houseplants. I'd scour my favorite online nurseries and pounce when they had a sale or [coupon code](#) up for grabs. Of course, I

already had some plants before the COVID situation, but adding more made my home feel cozier, livelier.

When buying [plants](#), I always opt for the smallest size because smaller plants are cheaper. I don't mind starting with tiny nursery plants. I feel accomplished when they start to outgrow their small pots. Still, it's a huge bummer when houseplants you've spent money on wilt and die.

I've been caring for a host of new plants this past year, and I can tell you which are worth your time and [money](#). Here are 5 houseplants that won't waste your money.

Snake Plant

When buying houseplants, I always look for ones that will fit my interior environment and my lifestyle. I have three types of lighting situations: two very sunny rooms, one partially shaded room, and another with very little light. When it comes to watering, I'm forgetful (but I have a handy app that reminds me when to care for my plants!) and prefer to fill my home with low-maintenance plants. Snake plants are the ultimate low-maintenance plants. They're also supremely attractive and give off a tropical vibe without needing specialized care.

Prayer Plant

Prayer plants provide a huge visual impact. Their showy leaves come in a variety of colors. The plants are also pretty easy to maintain. They like a lot of moisture, so they need frequent watering. If you tend to overwater your plants, prayer plants are a great option because it's tough to overwater them. They also don't mind partial shade conditions.

Zebra Plant

Buying manageable houseplants doesn't mean you're stuck with

visually boring specimens. I love the attractive stripey leaves on this plant. Zebra plants also require a lot of moisture, but the great thing about them is that they'll tell you when they're thirsty. The leaves immediately droop when it's time for watering—a handy signal for the forgetful gardener.

Calathea

These come in a slew of varieties, and they're all gorgeous. Calatheas can handle low light and have moderate watering needs. In my experience, they're pretty tough to kill!

Sword fern

A lot of people have trouble with ferns. I've heard past wisdom that they're fairly difficult to care for. I've had the opposite experience. As long as you provide them with plenty of water and keep the soil moist, they're happy. They also don't mind shade and actually prefer to be out of direct sunlight.

Quick plant care tips

I use an app that reminds me when it's time to water each of my plants. Previously, I'd water them all on the same schedule, which is a no-no. It's tough to remember each plant's individual needs, though. I suggest creating a spreadsheet with a watering schedule to help you get used to each plant's needs. Add reminders to your calendar, planner, or phone, so you don't forget.

Always have a [watering can](#)—any cheap one will do!—on hand, so you can water at a moment's notice.

I have two watering cans at the ready at all times. One is for watering, and the other contains liquid fertilizer. Having them both prepped and ready to go means I never skip out on

plant care tasks.

Harvesting Rainwater for the Frugal Gardener



HARVESTING RAINWATER
for the Frugal
Gardener

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Gardening requires quite a bit of water. For many gardeners

that means an increase in their water bill during the [hot summer](#) months. Statistics show that lawn and garden watering make up at least [40%](#) of our total household water use. Frugal gardeners, however, can take advantage of rainwater by bringing back an age-old, low-tech system of collecting water from roofs and gutter systems into rain barrels, or cisterns as they have been called. By harvesting rainwater, you can keep your little corner of the world green, decrease stormwater runoff, and cut costs all at the same time.

Harvesting rainwater

One inch of rain on a 1,000 square foot roof will produce 600 gallons of water. Capture just some of that chemical-free rain in a container of any kind and you'll be able to keep your veggie garden thriving and your flowers blooming all season, with no added expense. Your plants will thrive with the natural rainwater compared to water from municipal systems and the chemicals they typically add. Rainwater is a free source of soft water and also excellent for your houseplants.

Most rain barrels now come with the fittings for hooking up a hose, so getting harvesting rainwater is as simple as locating a barrel under a gutter and screwing in your hose. If you have a very small garden plot, or only use small containers, you can opt for a simpler system. Locate a barrel under a downspout and just dip your watering can in when you are planning to water your plants and containers. Each time it rains, you can store water up for the dry days or days you can't water due to summer rationing schedules.

Due to the amount of water coming off a roof, it is important to have a plan for overflow. It's important to have a valve to switch tanks. You can also go low tech and manually move the downspout away from the already full barrel to keep from having a mini Niagara Falls next to your buildings' foundation.

As with anything that holds water, be sure your system has a child-proof, secure lid to prevent accidents. You might also want to screen the opening to your container, not only keeping debris out of the water but discouraging mosquitoes from breeding.

Where to get a water barrel?

Here's a list of a few of the companies that carry water barrels and supplies to help you set up a water storage system. Remember, your system for harvesting rainwater can be as simple or as complex as you have time and money for. Just the savings from setting up one downspout and a barrel will make a difference. What frugal gardener doesn't want to tap into a free resource?

- [Clean Air Gardening](#)
- [NE Design](#)
- [Midwest Internet Sales](#)
- [Spruce Creek Rain Saver](#)
- [Garden Water Saver](#)

Check local regulations

Before purchasing anything, be sure to check with the water department where you live to see if they are sponsoring a [Rain Water Harvesting project](#). Many cities encourage the installation of rain barrels as a method of conservation. They may offer the barrels at a reduced price or give rebates if you purchase your barrel elsewhere. Some towns even offer workshops and supplies to build your own systems.

Rain barrels are one of the simplest, cheapest ways to conserve [water](#), allowing you to treat rainwater as a resource and not a waste product. Harvesting rainwater on your property can help make your garden a more environmentally friendly space.

Installing a Rain Barrel

Rain Water Harvesting

4 Cost-Effective Organic Garden Fertilizers



4 COST-EFFECTIVE

Organic Garden Fertilizers

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Regardless of what you're growing, your plants need nutrients. Without fertilizer, your plants will fail to thrive and grow big and strong. In the case of edibles, a lack of nutrients

can limit your crop and lead to poor production. Unfortunately, many fertilizers on the market are expensive. Thankfully there are cost-effective organic fertilizers you can use to boost your garden's productivity.

A word of caution

Before I jump into a list of cost-effective organic fertilizer suggestions, I want to talk a bit about fertilizing in general. Piling on fertilizer will NOT automatically make your garden more lush and productive. Fertilizing without testing your soil first can lead to a host of problems down the road. With fertilizer, more is not always better.

Always [test your soil](#) first to find out whether your garden is lacking nutrients. Read up about plant nutrient needs to ensure you're applying the right fertilizer.

While organic fertilizer is a lot less harmful to the environment than synthetic fertilizer, too much of it can still pose problems, so be cautious! If you think your plants are hungry for nutrients, double check first. They may be stressed or ailing for a different reason.

Organic fertilizers are an excellent alternative to synthetic ones because they help build soil quality over time and improve the soil's ability to retain nutrients and water. They're a lot less concentrated, which helps prevent overfertilization—though, it's still possible with certain commercial options.

Cost-Effective Organic Fertilizers

Fertilizers can be expensive. Organic options are even more so! So what are the options available for a frugal gardener? Here are a few cost-effective organic fertilizers to choose from:

Worm castings. Set up a worm farm or attract worms using a

[bucket system](#) and enjoy the fruits of their labor. Castings is a nice way of saying poop, but this excrement is mighty powerful! Worm poop is high in nitrogen and full of beneficial microbes and bacteria.

Coco coir. Coconut husks are an inexpensive, earth-friendly alternative to peat moss. While coir doesn't contain nutrients, it helps condition the soil and improves water and nutrient retention. It's also a great mulch option.

Homemade compost. It's easy to make your own compost at home! You'll need a balanced mix of kitchen scraps and other materials like dead leaves and grass clippings to get some rotting action going. Over time, the materials break down into a powerhouse of nutrients for your garden.

Seaweed. Sea kelp fertilizer is pricey, but if you live near a shoreline, you can collect your own smelly seaweed, let it rot for a bit, and make a seaweed fertilizer tea. It's not ideal for people who are sensitive to pungent smells, but it's a great totally free source of nutrients!

Free Funeral Home Plants



Before you discount the idea of free funeral plants, bear with me on this one. Getting free plants from a funeral home is possible. However, you may have to step out of your comfort

zone for this trick. Even those of you who consider yourselves outgoing might feel a bit odd about using a funeral home as a free plant source (This is one of the main reasons I left it out of [Ways To Get Plants For Free](#)).

Funeral homes are an excellent place to get free plants because almost everyone has the same initial reaction as you did. Ultimately, this means that in a nation where there is competition for virtually everything, this is one area where hardly a single person is taking advantage.

Almost every town has at least one funeral home and most funerals involve flowers and [plants](#). Years ago, I became aware that many families leave plants and flowers at the funeral home for various reasons. Often, it's because many people just don't have the space for all of them at home.

How to Get Free Funeral Plants

Here's how to set up a local funeral home connection.

The first step is to call the funeral home, introduce yourself, and explain your offer to them. You can solve their problem of what to do with the plants—at no cost to them. If they express any interest at all, leave your name, phone number, and email. You should promise to pick up any plants within 24 hours of a phone call.

If you don't sense a positive reaction to your offer, ask to speak to a supervisor or owner, and repeat the offer. If that call doesn't garner some interest, thank them and move on to the next name on your list.

You might be surprised when you get your first return phone call. At this point, ask for specific directions as to when and where to pick up the plants. Follow them to the letter. After the first pick up, follow up with a note to the funeral home, thanking them and giving them your contact information

again.

What to do With Your Haul

Once the plants are at home, do some sorting and decide which plants can go outdoors and which are going to become houseplants. Depending on the time of year and the weather in your zone, you can either get your new plants in the ground or treat the whole batch as house plants until you can safely plant them outside.

There may be a few plants in the bunch that has seen better days by the time you get them home. This is nothing to fret about. You can add the plant to your compost pile, put the soil in your container of [potting mix](#) and clean up the pot so you can put it to good use.

All in all, you stand to gain many plants for very little effort. It's all a matter of getting over that first hurdle most people have about dealing with a funeral home.

10 Ways to Get Free Plants



Get free plants and save money on your favorite pastime.

While gardening is one of the largest hobbies in the US, how

expensive a hobby depends a lot on how you approach it. It can be quite an expensive hobby when you purchase everything retail. However, it can also be an extremely frugal hobby for those who put a little extra time and creativity into how they get their gardens started.

In fact, it is quite possible to get an entire garden of plants for free. It's a challenge that I succeeded in doing in the past. Below you'll find ten ways that I was able to accomplish growing my garden for free.

How to Get Free Plants

Free plants? Sounds like it's too good to be true!

It's actually way easier than you'd think to source plants for free. Here are 10 ways to get free plants for your garden.

Craigslist and Other Online Marketplaces

Post a wanted ad on Craigslist, asking for free plants. Most gardeners love to help others out when they have excess in their own garden. (If you have some plants already, this is a great place to offer to trade plants). Another free site you can request free plants is on FreeCycle. You can also browse online marketplaces to find people who are giving their plants away for free. I often find local sellers giving away houseplants, cuttings, and perennials on the Facebook Marketplace. Something else you might find on these sites is free dirt. When people do any kind of landscaping or construction, there's often a lot of digging going on. They're left with a pile of dirt and nowhere to put it. Usually, as long as you have a way to pick up the extra soil, it's all yours!

Nursery

While you wouldn't typically think about getting free plants

at a nursery, they can be an excellent place to get them. Always take the time to ask if the nursery has any plants that they're going to be tossing? A part of the business is that sad-looking plants don't sell well and they need to get rid of them somehow. That often means throwing them out. When you pick up free plants this way, they won't look very good the first year, but with some TLC many can make a wonderful come back and look great for years to come.

Landscaping Crews

Another great place to get free plants is from landscaping crews. If you see a landscaping crew working on a job where they are replacing displays, be sure to stop and ask what they are going to do with the plants they are taking out. Often times the plants being replaced are going to be thrown out or composted. It doesn't hurt to ask, and more often than not you'll come away with a large number of plants.

One note with this approach is that you'd better be prepared for them to "gift" you with everything they were going to compost. You will want to travel with a kit for these situations in your vehicle which includes empty boxes, buckets, trash bags, garden gloves, etc. This approach is especially effective in civic gardens or at large commercial jobs.

Yellow Pages

Not having luck in finding landscapers on the road? Another effective approach is to open up the yellow pages and get on the phone. Call all the local landscapers and gardeners listed. Ask what they do with plants they remove from jobs. If they give you any indication that they toss those plants, offer to go pick up the garbage-bound plants. You'll save them the money it would normally cost in disposal fees.

Friends and Family

If you have friends that also garden, then you have a treasure trove of free plants waiting for you. Tell all your friends you're interested in adding to your garden and you'd be happy to help them divide their perennials, especially if they will share new starts with you.

Strangers

Heck, there's no reason to stop with friends. Tell perfect strangers that you're trying to add to your garden. Taking walks in neighborhoods notorious for their great gardens is a great way to do this. If you see someone working in their garden, be quick about telling them how terrific things look. Most gardeners are friendly and just love to talk plants. You'll also find that most are also quite generous. Don't be afraid to ask for a slip or start of what they are working on. If they have a mature garden, they are probably on the lookout for ways to get rid of excess plants.

Community Garden Groups

Join volunteer gardening organizations in your community. Native plant societies, city beautification work parties, and invasive plant clean up crews are some that come to mind. All of these activities will be filled with other gardeners. You can get free plants *and* advice as you work side by side and make new friends.

Volunteer Plants

Keep your eyes open when you're working in your garden early in the spring for plants making their way up on their own. These plants are called "volunteer plants" or "babies" that are coming up from seed.

The volunteer plants will often be a surprise since you did not specifically plant them. This means they likely won't appear where you'd expect them to be. The volunteer plants are quite easy to unearth with your hoe as you clean up. Simply save them, mark them or pot them up and move to a safe place to get a bit bigger before planting them in a permanent spot.

Save Seeds

If you already have plants, simply [save their seeds](#) to use in future years. It's an easy, eco-friendly way to get free plants. You can either start by using them to grow new plants indoors to place in the garden or sow them directly into the garden in the spring/summer. Also, be sure to save more than you need for your own garden. This will give you a supply of [seeds](#) to trade with others to bring in new plants to your garden for free.

Be Generous With Your Garden

While giving away extras from your own garden doesn't seem like a way to get free plants, in the world of gardening it's the way things work. The more generous you are, the more free plants that will end up at your door. I don't have a detailed explanation of why this works, but it does and you'll find that the more generous you are with the plants in your garden, the more that will find their way to your own garden.

Get More Bang for Your Buck

While this isn't a free way to get plants from day one, it is a way to get them in future years. If you do need to purchase some plants, be sure to buy the kinds that will [pay dividends](#). Buy [perennial](#) plants that need dividing every 3 – 5 years.

You can also start your own cuttings from woody-stemmed type shrubs. Flowers like dahlias & calla lilies come from tubers that need to be divided regularly, too. Over just a few years,

an initial investment in these types of plants will yield a very full garden.

There are also numerous houseplants that you can divide. Some, like the easy-to-care-for spider plant, will even produce babies for you.

If you've got other suggestions about ways to procure free plants, I'd love to [hear about them](#) – I'll just have to clear out another flower bed first!

Here's a quick video on how to divide perennials if you're not quite sure how to do it: