

Secrets of Successful Gardening: Mastering the Seven Key Elements

Gardening isn't as difficult as it seems, but it isn't that easy, either. Although it may seem like a long-term project, the garden will fail to thrive if you don't start it properly. But what are the elements that can make or break your garden? Well, they're a mix of a few organic components and gardening techniques.

According to [Gateway Home Garden Center Northern VA](#), *"Organic matter is necessary not only for soil moisture retention but also for maintaining adequate populations of beneficial soil microbes, essential in facilitating plant nutrient uptake."*

So, what are the key elements of a thriving garden? Take a look at the top seven below.

Soil

The first step of gardening is the soil. If your soil isn't ideal for accommodating and holding the plant, you will never build your dream garden. Soil monitors the optimum temperature, holds the plants and provides nutrients, filters rainwater and snow, and protects against pollutants. It usually has a mixture of minerals, air, water, and other organic matter. It must also contain a healthy pH level of 6.5 so that the plants stay alive.

If your soil isn't up to the mark, you can do soil amendments to make it more suitable for hosting and growing plants. Loamy, sandy, and heavy clay are some types of soils we see in gardening.

Mulch

Mulch is a type of component used for covering the soil, and it can be anything. It regulates the soil temperature by retaining moisture and preventing the growth of weeds. Using

mulch keeps the roots of your plants cool so that they don't die from the wrong temperature.

Both organic and inorganic mulches are used depending on your garden and plant type. However, unlike inorganic mulch, organic one can only suppress weeds and doesn't completely block it. You can use leaves, grass clippings, straw and hay, and even newspaper to create organic mulch. On the other hand, plastic, stone, gravel, and landscape fabric are great inorganic mulches.

Compost

Want to amend your soil? You need compost. But it's just not one component. Compost can have hundreds of variations, and you can make it with many ingredients depending on the amendment you desire. It can also enhance the organic matter and nutrients in the soil and increase the number of beneficial microbes in it. It adds or helps to retain nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus, copper, zinc, and other micronutrients that help your plants grow.

But where can you get compost? Well, [you can easily make some](#) in your garden. Green manure is perhaps the most common type that uses green plants. If you have cows and other farm animals, you can use their waste to create compost. Add earthworms to your soil, and you have vermicompost.

Watering System

The watering system, or irrigation, is vital for your garden. Your plants can't live without water, so you must ensure they get sufficient water regularly. A well-functioning irrigation system in your garden makes the task easy. It prevents water wastage and improves your harvest quality.

There are multiple irrigation systems. You can water the garden from above or directly water the plant roots. But whichever way you follow, it can take hours to water your garden, especially if the garden is big. Creating a good irrigation system saves time and ensures sufficient watering throughout the garden.

Plant Selection

Plant selection can make or break the look of your garden. First, check your soil type and research the types of plants most suitable for your environment. Avoid buying plants that might die or wither easily, or might have no chances to grow in your soil.

Next, find out how big your chosen type of plant can get. You don't want to see a twenty-foot-tall tree in the middle of some shrubs. Also, consider flowering time if you're building a flower garden. If you don't have much time to tend to your garden, choose a few easy-maintenance plants that can grow and sustain with minimal effort.

Pest and Disease Management

Pests can kill your beautiful garden. They can vary depending on your crops and plants, so educate yourself to learn which pests you're more likely to encounter. Then, prepare a pest control system for your garden.

The damage will not be prominent if your soil has enough nutrients. Keep your garden sanitized to prevent an infestation. Change the location of the potted plants so that pests can't make their home in one place. The air circulation between plants should be sufficient.

If the pests have already attacked your plants and crops, try to handpick them and throw them away if the number is manageable. In case of a severe infestation, apply pesticides. Consult with a professional before taking this step.

Seasonal Maintenance

How is the weather where you live? Do you get scorching heat or thick layers of snow in different seasons? Does it rain for days at a stretch? You might want to pay special attention to the seasonal maintenance of your garden if the weather is extreme in your area.

The main focus of Spring is to repair dead patches, clean up dead branches and twigs, and sufficiently water plants alongside applying fertilizers. Similarly, the focus of summer

is clipping and mowing your plants, and adding mulch and fertilizers. Rake your garden regularly in the fall, and repair broken units and irrigation systems in the winter.

Gardening is a great hobby because it gives you the joy of growing new lives in your backyard. Whether you grow fruits, vegetables, or flowers, a well-maintained garden can bring you incredible happiness. It also helps you de-stress and increase your patience. However, if you're busy with life but want a garden, you can try [low-maintenance gardening](#).