

Handy Hints for New Gardeners

Tools

Only 5 essential tools are needed to start work: spade, fork, trowel, rake and hoe.

How to begin

If your plot is overgrown, cut it back to a short stubble before you start digging.

Don't overdo it

Don't do too much digging when you start. As with any form of exercise, it's important to work at a steady pace and not rush any digging. It's best to start in autumn.

Remove weeds

When you prepare your plot ready for planting, remove the roots of perennial weeds like dock and dandelions. The hard work will pay off in the future.

Start a compost bin

Make a simple wooden frame to hold discarded vegetable matter, which will rot down. You may find it useful to have two - one composting and one to fill.

Sow seeds

It's important to sow seeds at the right time; April/May is best for seeds sown in the open. Before that, the ground may be too cold and wet. Only hardy seeds should be sown outdoors. The less hardy need protection and should be sown under glass in a sheltered spot or greenhouse. Check the packet.

Acclimatise plants

Young plants grown in a greenhouse or heated frame need to be gradually acclimatised to cooler outdoor conditions before planting out.

Planting seedlings

Seedlings should be planted into a moist soil and lightly watered in. Once established, wetting the surface with a light watering will only encourage a lazy root system.

Clean seed trays

All seed trays and pots should be kept thoroughly clean.

Rotate crops

Plan to grow a succession of crops during the year to make the most of your allotment.

Last but not least!

Your local library or bookshop is a good source of information about gardening basics. Fellow plotholders can also give lots of advice.



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**O'Dell House, Hunters Road, Corby, Northants
NN17 5JE T: 01536 266576 F: 01536 264509
E:natsoc@nsalg.org.uk W:www.nsalg.org.uk**