Level 1 Master Gardener Training

GENERAL GARDENING PRACTICES
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General Gardening Practices

- Site selection
- Preparing a planting bed
- Seed starting
- Mulching
- Watering
- Fertilizing

- Plant supports
- Pruning & pinching
- Fall clean up
- Season extension
- Growing in containers
SITE SELECTION
Site Considerations

Plant Needs

Plant Functions
Site Considerations

Light

Soil

Existing features
PREPARING A PLANTING BED
Timing

• Fall of year before
  – Take soil sample
  – Begin weed control
Existing Turf

- Strip
- Smother
- Spray
Tillage
Organic Matter
Double Digging

Remove top 6 – 8” of the first section and set aside.

Work up the next 6 – 8” deep in the same section.

Remove the top 6 – 8” of the second section, placing into the space in the first section, on top of the soil you just worked up.

Work up the next 6 – 8” deep in the second section.

Continue until the last section has had the bottom 6 – 8” worked up. Use the soil set aside from the first section, to finish filling in the final area.
The bottom layer in Row #1 has compost and fertilizer worked into it. The top layer is the topsoil from Row #2. See how topsoil from Row #3 is being moved to Row #2?

Soil from the 1st layer that was set aside.
Raised Beds
Starting Seeds Indoors

• Fill shallow containers with sterile seed-starting mix
• Plant seeds to a depth of 1-3 times their diameter
• Mist or bottom water to wet media
• Cover and place in warm, light location
• As soon as first green appears, uncover and move to cooler, bright location
Starting Seeds Indoors

• The worst conditions are too much warmth with low light
• Ideal is 65-68°F and 15-hour days
• Fluorescent lights work great
• Protect against damping off (fungal disease) with air movement
• Harden off prior to transplanting outside
Direct Seeding

- Some annuals can be direct seeded into the bed
- Prepare soil as for transplants
- Wait until danger of frost is past
- Smooth surface and plant seed at a depth of 1-3 times their diameter
- Cover with thin layer of organic matter or vermiculite to prevent crusting
- Mist and keep seedbed moist until germinated
Sowing Seed

- Prep seedbed
- Apply fertilizer
- Planting depth
- Cover with fine soil
- Water carefully
Transplanting

- Annuals
- Perennials
- Vegetables
- Trees & shrubs
  – discussed in Woody Plants section
Transplanting

• Carefully remove plant from pot or cell
• Gently tear apart root ball to encourage roots to grow into surrounding soil
• Prune away any damaged stems or roots
Transplanting

- Plant to same level as growing in container
- Firm soil around root and stem
- Water thoroughly to settle
- Use starter fertilizer
  - Higher in phosphorus
MULCHING
Quick Quiz

**Why use mulch?**

- Can unify the landscape
- Insulation for soil
- Control weeds
- Conserve moisture
- Reduce soil compaction
- Improve soil structure
- Walkways
What to use?
How to mulch

Mulch -- keep away from plant stems
When to mulch

- **Summer mulch**
- **Winter mulch**
WATERING
How to water (not)
How to water
• 1 inch per week equals 6 gal. per 10 sq. ft.
• Sand, silt, clay
When to Water

• Early in the day
  – Leaves dry quickly

Exceptions:
  – Extreme heat – lightly sprinkle
  – Dry periods – spray foliage
  – Aphids – spray foliage
PLANT SUPPORTS
• Vining stems
• Weak stems
• String, wire, structures, branches
Pea Stakes
Tying
PRUNING, PINCHING, & THINNING
Pruning

- Correct irregular growth
- Change bloom time
- Change fruit/flower size
- Aid in controlling disease and insect pests
Quick Quiz

“Pinching” back a plant leads to:

A. Shorter plants
B. Thicker stems
C. Bushier plants
D. Angry plants
Thinning

Before Thinning

After Thinning
Cutting back

LATERAL FLOWERHEAD

TERMINAL FLOWERHEAD

LEAF AXIL

LATERAL BUD

LATERAL LEAF

BASAL FOLIAGE
Quick Quiz

What is “deadheading”?

A. Cutting back of plant to delay bloom

B. Removing flowers after they start to fade and before seeds mature

C. Removal of seed to use in the future

D. A form of directional pruning.
Disbudding
FERTILIZING
• **Fertilizing**
  – At bed preparation or planting
  – Depends:
    • Annuals – regularly thru season
    • Perennials - Every three years (if needed)
      – As growth resumes in the spring
    • Trees & Shrubs – fall if there is a reason
    • Fruit trees – varies
    • Vegetables - varies
Analysis

- N-P-K

Formulation

- Soluble
- Granular
- Slow-release
Application
Synthetic fertilizers
Organic Fertilizers
GROWING IN CONTAINERS
Containers

MUST HAVE DRAINAGE!
Growing Medium
Varieties

- Patio types
- Determinate types
- Dwarf types
Water & Fertilization

• Less soil, needs watering more often, washes fertilizer away so needs fertilizing more often
FALL CLEAN-UP
Sanitation & Seasonal Interest
Individual Plant Covers

- Cloches
- Walls o’ water
- Old bedsheets
- Winter mulches
Cold Frames
Hot Bed
• Floating row covers
• Hoop houses