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Gardening **FOR** **DUMMIES®**

Sue Fisher

Horticulturist and gardening writer

Michael MacCaskey

Editor-in-chief of National Gardening magazine

Bill Marken

Editor-in-chief of eHow.com

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Gardening
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Gardening FOR **DUMMIES®**

**by Sue Fisher, Michael MacCaskey, Bill Marken,
and the Editors of the National Gardening
Association**



JOHN WILEY & SONS, LTD

Gardening For Dummies®

Published by
John Wiley & Sons, Ltd
The Atrium
Southern Gate
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 8SQ
England

E-mail (for orders and customer service enquires): cs-books@wiley.co.uk

Visit our Home Page on www.wileyeurope.com

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data: A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN-13: 978-0-470-01843-9 (PB)

ISBN-10: 0-470-01843-7 (PB)

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Bell and Bain Ltd, Glasgow

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



WILEY

About the Authors

Sue Fisher is a lifelong plant enthusiast whose main aim is to make gardening as user-friendly and approachable as possible. After training at Oaklands College, St Albans, the first ten years of her career were spent in the nursery and garden centre industry, including five years as plant buyer for a group of top garden centres and a landscape company. In 1990 Sue decided to bring her enthusiasm for plants to a wider audience and became a freelance writer and broadcaster. To date she has written ten books, including *Garden Colour*, *Essential Plants for Small Gardens*, and *Fast Plants*, as well as co-authoring *Ground Force Garden Handbook* and *Geoff Hamilton's Gardening Year*, and contributed to several of the Reader's Digest gardening books. Her gardening features have been published in many magazines and newspapers, including *Gardeners' World*, *Gardens Monthly*, and *Garden News*. Sue currently gardens in Buckinghamshire where her two young children are fast making her an expert on family gardening.

Michael MacCaskey began his college career as a creative arts student at San Francisco State University in 1969, but in the process became instead a passionate gardener. By 1976 he received a Bachelor of Science degree in ornamental horticulture from California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo. Since then, he's had the good fortune to work for and learn from garden editors such as Walter Doty, Richard Dunmire, Joe Williamson, and Bill Marken. A second-generation Los Angeles native (zone 9), he was appointed Editor-in-Chief of Vermont-based *National Gardening Magazine* (zone 4) in 1994. Since then, he's been learning about gardening in a short-season, cold-winter region. His magazine writing has been honoured by both the Western Magazine Publishers Association and the Garden Writers of America.

Bill Marken is the editor of *Rebecca's Garden Magazine*, a new publication from Hearst Magazines Enterprises based on the popular television show. A lifelong resident of California, Bill served as editor-in-chief of *Sunset*, the *Magazine of Western Living*, from 1981 to 1996. Earlier in his career, he wrote for the magazine's garden section, pitched in on several editions of the best-selling *Western Garden Book*, and generally nurtured his interests in subjects related to gardening, landscaping, travel, and other aspects of the good life in the West. A vacation garden at 6,200-foot elevation gives him insight into cold-winter climates with 100-day growing seasons.

The National Gardening Association is the largest member-based, nonprofit organisation of home gardeners in the US. Founded in 1972 (as 'Gardens for All') to spearhead the community garden movement, today's National Gardening Association is best known for its bimonthly publication, *National Gardening Magazine*. Reporting on all aspects of home gardening, each issue is read by some half-million gardeners worldwide. For more information about the National Gardening Association in the US, see its Web site at www.garden.org.

Dedication

We dedicate this book to new gardeners, individuals who sow a packet of seeds, plant a tree, or otherwise nurture a plant for the first time.

Publisher's Acknowledgements

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

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Cover Photo: © Photographer's Choice/
Getty Images

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Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Part I: Getting Going with Gardening</i>	<i>7</i>
Chapter 1: Just a Few Ground-Level Questions and Answers	9
Chapter 2: Planning Your Garden	17
Chapter 3: Planning Your Planting	33
<i>Part II: Designing with Plants</i>	<i>43</i>
Chapter 4: Trees, Hedges, and Shrubs	45
Chapter 5: Lawns and Ground Covers	67
Chapter 6: Climbers and Wall Shrubs	87
<i>Part III: Colour Your World</i>	<i>101</i>
Chapter 7: Annuals	103
Chapter 8: Perennials and Ornamental Grasses	117
Chapter 9: Bulbs	129
Chapter 10: Roses	143
<i>Part IV: At Ground Level</i>	<i>161</i>
Chapter 11: Understanding and Improving Soil	163
Chapter 12: Raising Plants from Seeds	179
Chapter 13: Choosing and Putting in Your Plants	191
<i>Part V: Caring for Your Plants</i>	<i>205</i>
Chapter 14: Watering, Feeding, and Composting	207
Chapter 15: Snip, Snip: Pruning and Propagating	227
Chapter 16: Fighting Pests, Diseases, and Weeds	239
Chapter 17: Tools of the Trade	261
<i>Part VI: Special Gardens</i>	<i>271</i>
Chapter 18: Food Gardens	273
Chapter 19: Container Gardens	289
Chapter 20: Gardens for Wildlife	307

Chapter 21: Gardening in Small Spaces	315
Chapter 22: Gardening for Fragrance.....	323
<i>Part VII: The Part of Tens</i>	333
Chapter 23: Ten Quick Projects	335
Chapter 24: Ten Tips for Creating a Wildlife Garden	345
<i>Index</i>	349

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

About This Book.....	1
Conventions Used in This Book	2
Foolish Assumptions	2
How This Book Is Organised.....	2
Part I: Getting Going with Gardening	2
Part II: Designing with Plants	3
Part III: Colour Your World	3
Part IV: At Ground Level	3
Part V: Caring for Your Plants	4
Part VI: Special Gardens	4
Part VII: The Part of Tens	4
Icons Used in This Book.....	5
Where to Go from Here.....	5

Part 1: Getting Going with Gardening..... 7

Chapter 1: Just a Few Ground-Level Questions and Answers 9

How Do I Make My Plants Grow Rather than Die?	9
Your climate and microclimates.....	10
Sun and shade	11
Soil and water	11
What Can I Use My Garden For?	12
Do I Have to Learn a Foreign Language?	13
The fancy name	13
The common name.....	14

Chapter 2: Planning Your Garden 17

Taking Stock of Your Existing Garden.....	18
Tackling an Overgrown Garden	20
Dreaming Up the Perfect Landscape	21
Who will use your garden?	22
When will you use your garden?	23
Creating a garden with a sense of place	23
Cutting down on maintenance.....	24
What Goes Where: Designing the Plan	25
Using your space effectively	26
Creating garden boundaries and pathways	26
Hard landscaped areas	28

Creating a Final Plan	31
Using your computer	32
Field testing.....	32
Chapter 3: Planning Your Planting	33
Choosing a Garden Style	33
Matchmaking: Right Plant, Right Place	35
Creating Year-round Colour and Interest	36
Drawing Up a Planting Plan.....	37
Permanent Plants for Structure.....	38
Trees and shrubs.....	38
Architectural plants	39
Infilling for Colour through the Seasons	39
Bursts of Bloom with Bulbs and Annuals.....	40
Planting for Privacy	41
How Many Plants, How Far Apart?	42
 <i>Part 11: Designing with Plants</i>	 43
Chapter 4: Trees, Hedges, and Shrubs	45
Tree-mendous: The Benefits of Trees	45
Choosing the Right Tree.....	46
Don't Try This at Home.....	48
Our Favourite Trees	50
Hedging Your Bets: Choosing the Right Hedge	53
Growth rates	54
Hedges as windbreaks	54
Low hedges	55
Our Favourite Hedge Plants.....	55
Plants for formal hedges	55
Plants for informal hedges	56
The Workforce of the Garden: Shrubs	57
What Shrubs Can Do for You	58
Design considerations	58
Organising shrubs by height and shape.....	59
Our Favourite Shrubs	60
 Chapter 5: Lawns and Ground Covers	 67
Lawn Decisions.....	67
Size matters.....	68
Seed vs turf	68

Preparing the Ground for a New Lawn	68
Tackling weeds	68
Checking soil pH.....	69
Getting to grips with the ground	69
Going to Seed: Making a Lawn from Seed	71
Working out how much seed you need	71
Sowing your seed	71
Making a Lawn from Turf	73
Buying turf.....	73
Laying turf	74
Keeping Your Lawn Happy	76
Weeding	76
Mowing	77
Fertilising.....	77
Watering.....	78
Tune-ups and face-lifts.....	78
Going for Ground Covers	79
Planting and caring for ground covers	80
Top ground-cover choices.....	81
Musing on Meadows	82
Wildflower meadows.....	83
Spring meadows	83
Summer meadows	84
Converting a Lawn to a Meadow	84
Preparing soil for meadow planting.....	84
Sowing meadow seed.....	85
Yee-hah! Prairie Planting	85

Chapter 6: Climbers and Wall Shrubs 87

Playing Twister	87
Advice for Climbers	89
Don't let climbers grow where they shouldn't	89
Provide sturdy support	90
Prepare the ground	90
Prune for healthy plants.....	90
Lean on Me: Choosing a Support and Plants to Match	91
Wire and trellis supports.....	91
Bamboo wigwams.....	94
Chain-link fences	94
Pillars	95
Arbours and pergolas	95
Growing climbers through other plants	95
Climbers We Love.....	96
Annual Climbers.....	98

Part III: Colour Your World 101**Chapter 7: Annuals103**

What's an Annual?	103
Analysing Annuals	105
Hardy annuals	106
Half-hardy annuals and tender perennials	106
Biennials	107
Planting on the Sunny Side	107
Buying and Growing Half-hardy Annuals	108
What You Can Do with Annuals	109
Playing with colour	109
Using shape, height, and structure	110
Designing for fragrance	110
Getting annuals together	111
Containing annuals	112
Taking Care of Your Annuals	112
Our Favourite Annuals	113
Hardy annuals	113
Half-hardy annuals and tender perennials	115
Biennials	116

Chapter 8: Perennials and Ornamental Grasses117

Pondering Perennials	117
Beds and Borders	118
Designing a Border with Perennials	119
Beyond borders	120
Planting Perennials . . . and Afterwards	121
Raising perennials and grasses from seed	121
Caring for your plants	121
Our Favourite Perennials	124
Gorgeous Grasses	127

Chapter 9: Bulbs129

Throwing Some Light on Bulbs	129
When and How to Buy Bulbs	130
Spring-blooming bulbs	130
Summer-blooming bulbs	131
Shopping tips	132
Planting Bulbs	132
What's your style?	134
Beware the creatures	135
Caring for Bulbs	135
Dividing and Propagating Bulbs	136

Growing Bulbs in Containers	136
Forcing Bulbs for Indoor Colour	137
Favourite Bulbs	138

Chapter 10: Roses143

Roses by Many Names All Smell As Sweet.....	144
Time for hybrid teas	144
Fun with floribundas	145
Climbing high with roses.....	145
Using smaller roses	147
When a rose is a tree.....	148
Shrub roses	148
Gardening with Roses.....	152
Buying Roses	153
Planting Roses	155
Fertilising and Watering	156
Cutting Through the Mystery of Pruning.....	156
O Rose, Thou Art Sick: Keeping Roses Healthy.....	158

Part IV: At Ground Level..... 161

Chapter 11: Understanding and Improving Soil163

Clearing the Ground.....	163
Stripping turf.....	164
Composting turf.....	165
Other soil-clearing methods	165
The big cover-up.....	166
Getting to Know Your Soil	166
Soil texture	167
Soil structure.....	169
One more big thing: Soil pH	170
Improving Your Soil	171
Top ingredients for scrumptious soil	172
Changing pH.....	173
Adding nutrients.....	173
Green manure crops and cover crops	174
Cultivating the Soil.....	174
Single digging	175
Time for a rotovator.....	175
Double digging.....	176
Simple raised beds	177
The easy approach: no-dig beds	178

Chapter 12: Raising Plants from Seeds179

What Those Needy Seeds Need.....	180
Smart Seed Shopping.....	180
Sowing Seeds Right in the Ground.....	181
A Dozen Easy Plants to Direct Sow.....	184
Starting Seeds Indoors	185
A Dozen Easy Plants to Start Indoors.....	188

Chapter 13: Choosing and Putting in Your Plants191

A Matter of Timing: Buying Plants in Season.....	191
Working Out Spacing for Seasonal Flowers	193
Planting Seasonal Flowers, Step by Step.....	194
Container-Grown Permanent Plants	196
Choosing container-grown hardy plants	196
When to plant	197
Transplanting permanent plants from containers	197
Staking a tree.....	199
Bare-Root Planting	200
Choosing bare-root plants.....	200
Planting bare-root plants.....	200
Planting a New Hedge.....	201
Preparing the ground.....	201
Aftercare	203
Temporary windbreaks	203
Burlap-Wrapped Root Balls.....	203
Choosing balled-and-burlapped plants	203
Planting balled-and-burlapped plants.....	204

Part V: Caring for Your Plants205**Chapter 14: Watering, Feeding, and Composting207**

Watering Basics	207
Target the right plants	208
Different ways to water your plants.....	209
How much, how often?	211
Using water wisely	211
Providing a Balanced Diet for Your Plants.....	212
Don't Compromise, Fertilise!	213
Applying fertilisers	213
Different fertilisers for various plants	216
Soil conditioners.....	216
Piling onto the Compost Bandwagon	217
From refuse to riches	217
Bin there, done that!.....	218

To build or to buy?	219
Ready-made bins	219
Heapin' it on	221
Leafmould	223
Wiggly wormeries	223
Make a woody pile	223
A-Mulching We Will Go	223
Organic mulches	224
Inorganic mulches	225
Chapter 15: Snip, Snip: Pruning and Propagating	227
Practical Pruning	227
How pruning affects plant growth	229
The kindest cuts	230
Pruning trees	231
Pruning in winter	231
Pruning in spring	232
Pruning in summer	233
Renovating an overgrown shrub	233
Pruning Tools	234
Safety First	235
Plants for Free: Down-to-Earth Propagating	235
Softwood cuttings	236
Layering	237
Division	237
Chapter 16: Fighting Pests, Diseases, and Weeds	239
Prevention Is Better than Cure	240
Identifying Damage	241
Common Insect Pests	242
Pest Control: Organic vs Chemical	246
Encouraging 'good' insects and creatures	247
Buying biological controls	248
Preventing Plant Diseases	249
Weeding Out Weeds	253
Know your enemy	253
Controlling weeds	254
Weedkilling the slow and easy way	255
Weed Prevention	256
Mulches and membranes	256
Planting through membrane	257
Ten wicked weeds	258
Chapter 17: Tools of the Trade	261
Hand Tools	261
Ten top tools	261
Hand-tool maintenance	263

Powering Up Your Tools	264
Lawnmowers	264
Mower safety and maintenance.....	266
Strimmers	267
Brushcutters	267
Rotovators.....	267
Garden shredders.....	268
Aerators, rakes, sweepers, and blowers	269

Part VI: Special Gardens.....271

Chapter 18: Food Gardens273

Planning a Vegetable Garden	273
Seasonal preferences	274
Choose the right location.....	275
Make the garden the right size	275
Designing the garden	276
Improving the soil	277
Planting Your Vegetable Garden.....	277
All in the timing	278
Raise them right	279
Have a happy harvest	280
The Best of the Crop.....	280
Getting Technical: Hybrids, Heirlooms, and AGM Varieties	282
Squeezing in Herbs	282
Fruity Harvests	284
Six tips for a fruit tree harvest.....	285
Fruits for the home garden	285

Chapter 19: Container Gardens289

Choosing the Right Containers.....	290
Designing with Container Plants	292
Style points.....	292
Combining plants in containers	293
Arranging containers	293
Putting It All Together	296
Favourite Container Combos.....	296
Annuals all summer.....	296
Easy-care permanent plants	297
Delectable edibles	298
Container Plants for Four Seasons.....	298
Choosing the Right Compost.....	299
Soil-less potting compost	300
Hanging basket compost	300

Soil-based potting compost	300
Lime-free potting compost	301
Planting Up Your Containers	301
Planting a Hanging Basket.....	302
Keeping Your Containers Happy	302
Fertilising.....	303
Repotting	303
Chapter 20: Gardens for Wildlife	307
Pampering Your Feathered Friends	308
Bird-table banquets.....	308
Bird baths going cheep	310
Beckoning Butterflies to Your Garden.....	311
Designing for butterflies	313
Mixing a butterfly cocktail	313
Catching up with caterpillars	313
Buzzing Bees and Pollination	314
Chapter 21: Gardening in Small Spaces	315
Simple Pleasures: Small Garden Design	315
Details make the difference.....	316
Creating illusions	316
Finding Space Where It Doesn't Exist	317
Getting the Most from Your Front Garden	319
Small is beautiful: Garden style	319
Picking a path	320
Choosing the Best Small-garden Plants.....	321
Chapter 22: Gardening for Fragrance	323
Discovering Fragrant Plants	323
Planning a Scented Garden	324
Flowers Most Possessed with Scent.....	325
Creating a Fragrant Evening Garden.....	327
The Most Aromatic Herbs.....	328
Heavenly Scented Shrubs and Climbers	328
Best Bulbs for Fragrance.....	330
Redolent Roses.....	331
<i>Part VII: The Part of Tens.....</i>	333
Chapter 23: Ten Quick Projects	335
Cooking Up Herb Vinegars	335
Making Cut Flowers Last	336
Drying Flowers	337

Making a Flowering Centrepiece	338
Creating an Autumn Harvest Wreath	339
Forcing Narcissus Indoors	340
Creating a Water Garden in a Tub	340
Preparing a Salad Basket	341
Finding Treasures from Twigs	342
Cleaning Containers	343

Chapter 24: Ten Tips for Creating a Wildlife Garden 345

Choose the Right Plants	345
Plant a Tree	346
Plant Up Walls and Fences	346
Choose Hedges Instead of Fences	346
Create a Pond	346
Convert Your Lawn to a Meadow	347
Bear with the Bugs	347
Compost Your Waste	347
Don't Be Too Tidy	348
Be Environmentally Friendly	348

***Index* 349**

Introduction

The more you discover about gardening, the more satisfying it is. Gardening is all about a process that delights the eye and fuels the soul with a connection to the earth. As countless teachers and community workers have learned, gardening is one of the quickest (and cheapest!) ways to reduce vandalism and crime, and to increase community pride. Gardening is good for the body. An hour or two of weeding, harvesting, or cultivating provides just the right kind of light exercise we all need. Responsible gardening also does good things for the environment: materials get recycled and certain habitats attract wildlife, for example.

The point is, gardening has moved out of the vegetable patch and the flower bed. Gardening now encompasses our lives – if you have a garden, even a very tiny one, you are a gardener. If you have a sunny windowsill, you are a gardener. National surveys show that gardening has become the most popular, least exclusive hobby of all. Everybody's doing it.

People are simply enjoying their time outdoors and striving to make their little corner of the world more peaceful and beautiful – a better place to live. And that's what this book is about.

About This Book

You have in your hands a gardening encyclopedia in miniature – all you need to know to get off to a good start. No matter what area of gardening interests you – growing roses or perennials or just cutting the grass – you'll find good advice here. In every chapter, our basic goal is to give you the information you need to go out and plant or prune what you want. But novices aren't the only ones who'll find this book useful. Gardening is such a huge topic that no one ever comes close to knowing everything about it. (That's one reason why gardening has become one of the most popular hobbies of all time.) If, for example, you are a seasoned rose grower but know almost nothing about starting a salad garden or pruning trees, you can find excellent advice in Chapters 18 or 15, respectively.

This book offers lists of plants that you can choose from to create a beautiful garden. We list the plants by the common name first, followed by the botanical name. The lists are alphabetised according to the botanical name.

Conventions Used in This Book

To help you navigate through this book, we've set up a few conventions:

- ✓ *Italic* is used for emphasis and to highlight new words or terms that are defined.
- ✓ **Boldfaced** text is used to indicate the action part of numbered steps.
- ✓ `Monofont` is used for Web addresses.

Foolish Assumptions

In this book, we make some general assumptions about who you are:

- ✓ You've bought a place with a garden and suddenly realise that you don't know your begonias from your buttercups. You want to know the basics on how to get started on creating an outside space that you'll love spending time in.
- ✓ You need a helpful reference guide to answer all those questions you have about when exactly to plant bulbs, how much room certain plants will take up when they mature, and how to improve your soil.
- ✓ You want easy-to-understand information that explains exactly what you need to know about raising plants from seed, pruning, weeding, and controlling garden pests.

How This Book Is Organised

Gardening For Dummies is organised into seven parts, each covering a general topic. The chapters within each part go into more detail so you can easily find the information you need.

Part 1: Getting Going with Gardening

Before you buy your first six-pack of bedding in spring, you need to decide just where and when to start digging.

Chapter 1 begins at root level, guiding you through what your plants need to what you want from a garden.

Chapter 2 gets into the details of designing or planning a garden, with emphasis on making a plan that you can work to as your plot develops.

Chapter 3 is all about planning your plantings, how to choose the right plants for your garden and those that work best for you.

Part II: Designing with Plants

Chapter 4 goes over the garden's skeleton – the trees, hedges, and shrubs that form your garden's foundation and frame your plot.

Chapter 5 goes down to ground level and discusses lawns and ground covers, while the vertical dimension (climbers and wall shrubs) gets similar treatment in **Chapter 6**.

Part III: Colour Your World

Here's where the real fun starts! This part is the heart of the book because, for most people, the essence of gardening is putting in colourful plants and watching them grow.

Chapter 7 tells you about those comets of the garden, flowering annuals.

Chapter 8 is about the colourful stalwarts, the perennials. We also talk about ornamental grasses.

Chapter 9 deals with bulbs for all seasons – not just spring.

Chapter 10 covers the world's most famous flower, the rose.

Part IV: At Ground Level

This section is the nitty-gritty of gardening – literally. The three chapters in this part are about working with soil and getting your plants started.

Chapter 11 helps you understand and improve your soil.

You find the basics of starting seeds in **Chapter 12**, and planting methods for a whole range of seasonal, permanent, and other plants in **Chapter 13**.

Part V: Caring for Your Plants

In a nutshell, this section covers long-term garden maintenance.

Chapter 14 covers everything you need to know about the basics of plant care: watering, feeding, and composting.

Chapter 15 covers pruning, **Chapter 16** common sense pest control, and **Chapter 17** all those tools you need to help you.

Part VI: Special Gardens

It's back to the fun stuff – plants and planting – in this section!

If you want to grow at least some of your own food, check out **Chapter 18**. In **Chapter 19**, discover what it takes to create a moveable feast with containers.

In **Chapter 20**, you figure out how to achieve one of the most important gardens of all: the kind that's made with wildlife in mind.

Don't worry if you have just a small patch of garden; **Chapter 21** lets you in on some limited-space gardening secrets.

Chapter 22 is all about creating a fragrant garden.

Part VII: The Part of Tens

No *For Dummies* book is complete without the Part of Tens, so we offer a compendium of expert tips for ten quick projects (**Chapter 23**).

Chapter 24 gives you ten hints on how to make your garden even more attractive to wildlife.

Icons Used in This Book

Icons are a handy For Dummies way to draw your attention to special bits of information.



Bear these important nuggets of information in mind as your green fingers develop.



Flags information that can save you time and effort in the garden.



Demystifies gardening lingo. Although we've made this book as jargon-free as possible, you need to know some terms.



This icon alerts you to avoid bad gardening experiences, including some that may cause injury.

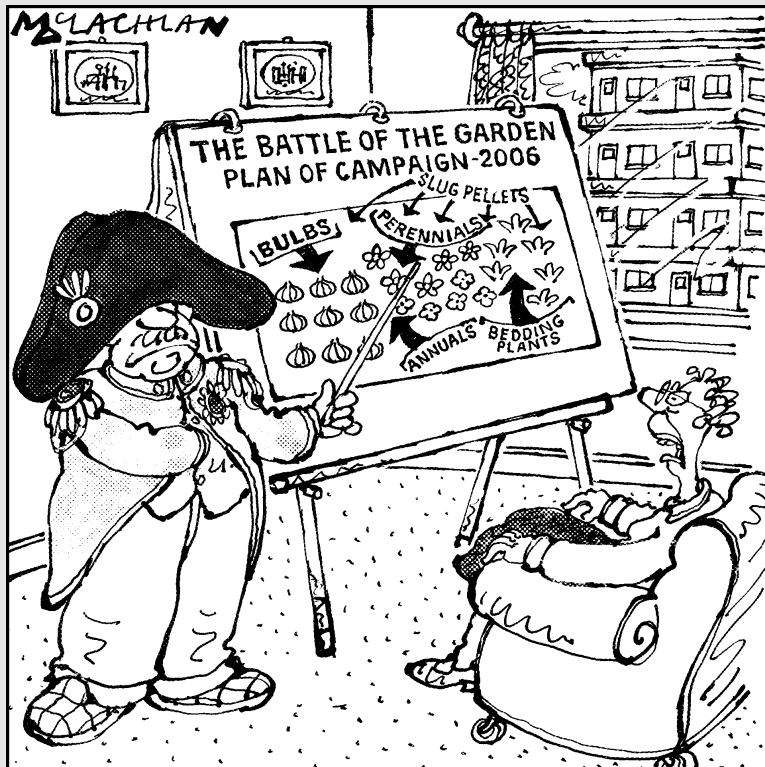
Where to Go from Here

This book is organised so you can skip to wherever you want to find complete information about a topic. Mad about roses? Dive straight into Chapter 10. Want to prune that shrub that's taking up half your lawn? Find out how to tame it with the help offered in Chapter 15. You can use the table of contents to find broad categories of information or use the index to look up more specific topics.

Of course, you can always start with Part I – what a novel idea!

Part I

Getting Going with Gardening



"For heaven's sake, Ernest - we've only
got a window box!"

In this part . . .

You've probably heard about the green thumbs and the brown thumbs. Some people seem to have an almost magical ability to raise beautiful, healthy plants, whereas others seem to turn out only withering brown husks.

No matter which group you identify with, take note: Anyone can become a gardener. Like any other interest that's worth pursuing, gardening requires knowledge, experience, attention, and enthusiasm. If you're willing to dedicate some time and attention to gardening, you can move from the brown thumb camp into the green thumb camp. If you already consider yourself to have a green thumb, you undoubtedly know that gardening never ceases to surprise you, and you never finish learning.

Part I gives you a basic understanding of some of the key issues that gardeners face: what plants require in order to thrive, how to plan your garden to suit your lifestyle, what to do to cut down on maintenance, how to choose the best plants for your garden, and how to take the space you have and maximise it.

Well, what are you waiting for? Get going!