



Get green fingers,
and watch your garden grow

Gardening

FOR

DUMMIES®

Sue Fisher

Horticulturist and gardening writer

Michael MacCaskey

Editor-in-chief of National Gardening magazine

Bill Marken

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A Reference for the Rest of Us!™



UK Edition



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



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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-feet 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.

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

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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 I: 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.